

July 2010

The recent explosion of riots and rebellions within the prison system whisper the prelude to a requiem that will send these cages up in a cloud of smoke, back to the dead colonials that gave them form.

AGAINST PRISON



“Poor human nature, what horrible crimes have been committed in thy name! Every fool, from king to policeman, from the flat-headed parson to the visionless dabbler in science, presumes to speak authoritatively of human nature. The greater the mental charlatan, the more definite his insistence on the wickedness and weaknesses of human nature. Yet, how can any one speak of it today, with every soul in a prison,

with every heart fettered, wounded, and maimed?”

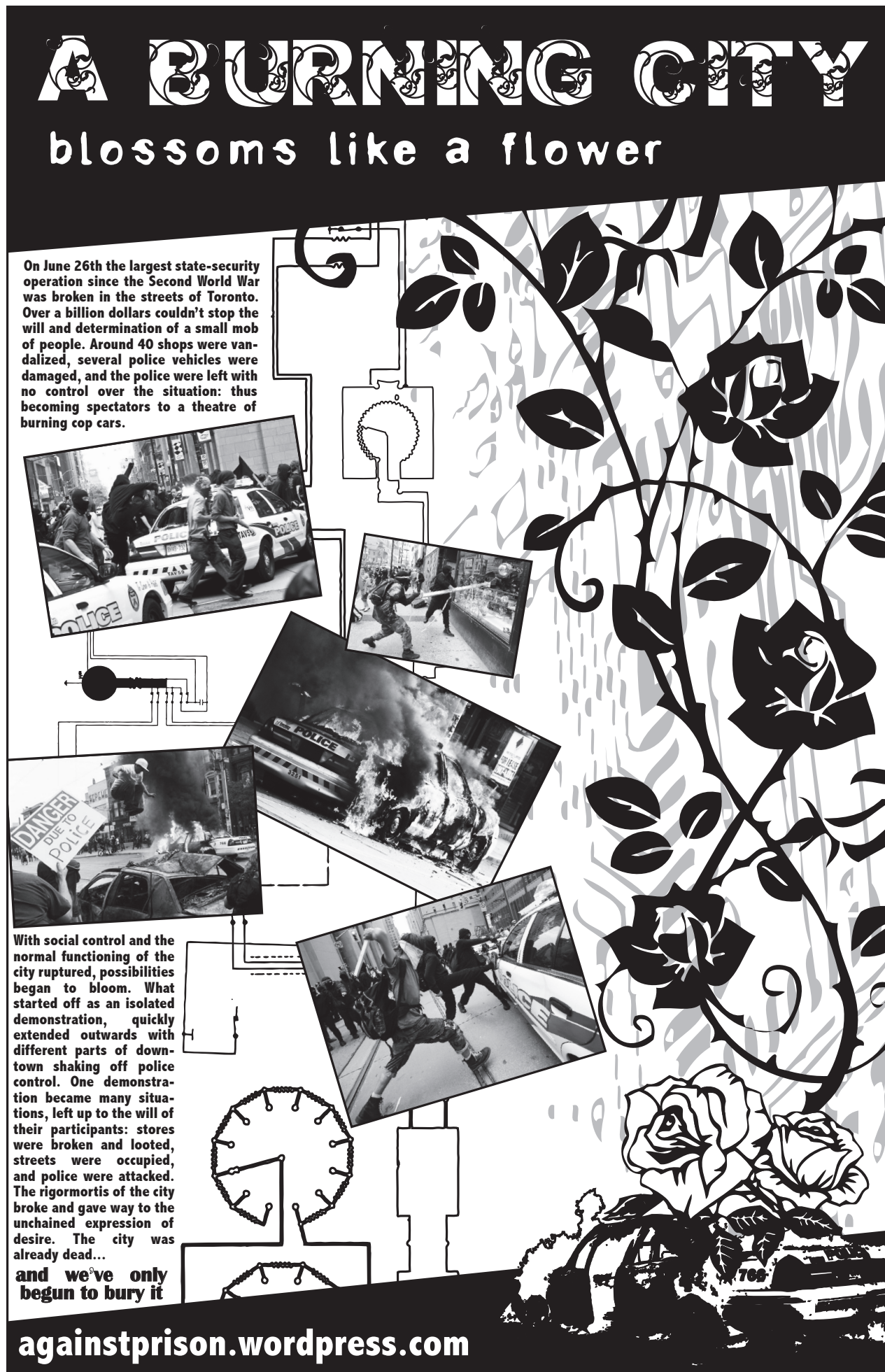
John Burroughs has stated that experimental study of animals in captivity is absolutely useless. Their character, their habits, their appetites undergo a complete transformation when torn from their soil in field and forest. With human nature caged in a narrow space, whipped daily into submission, how can we speak of its potentialities?”

— E. Goldman

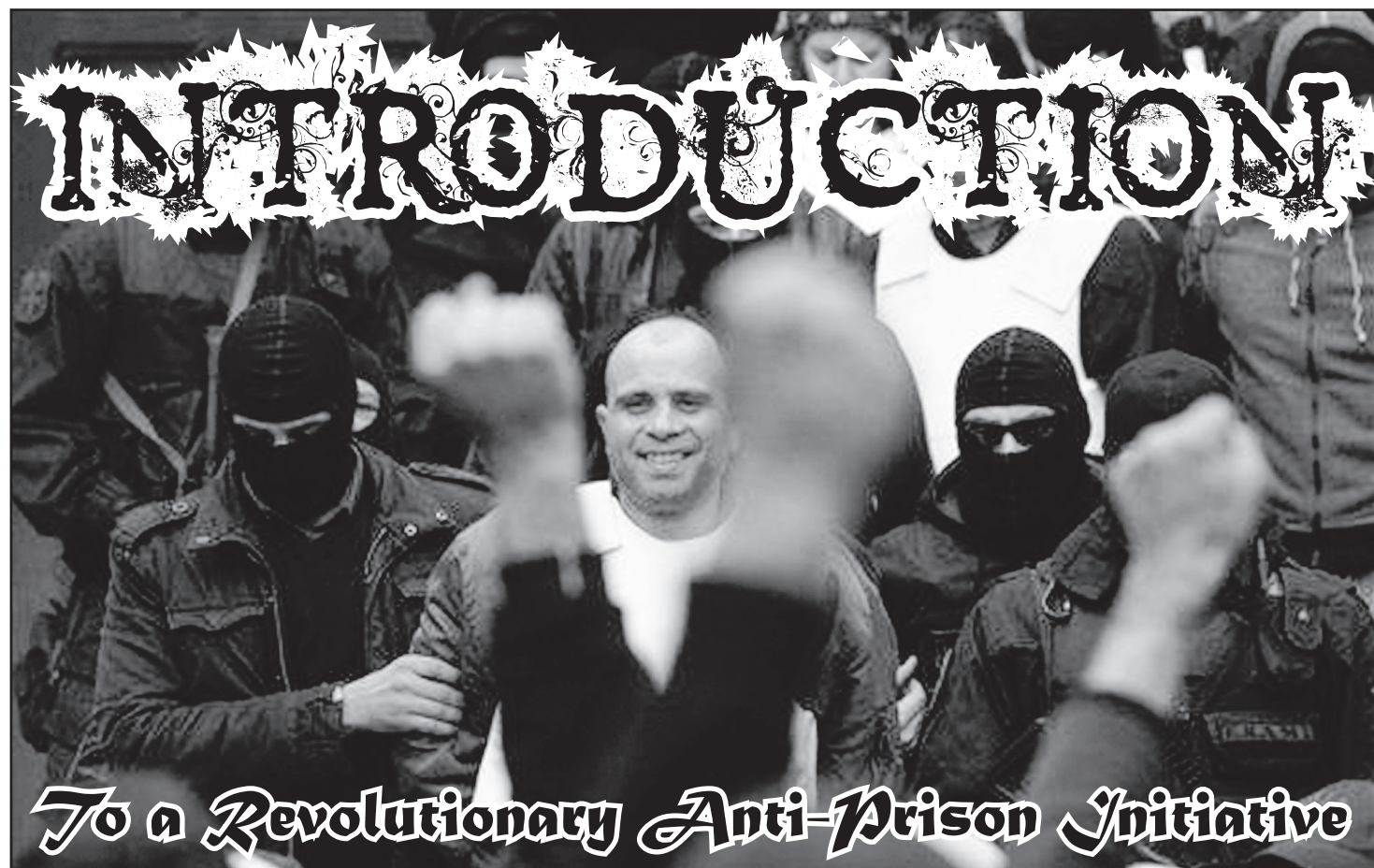


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Sandwiched between the front and back cover of this publication are ideas. They aren't empty opinions, they come from people's lived experiences: these are ideas that have been experimented with and can continue to be developed if we apply them to our lives. We can never know the outcome of our actions before we take risks and experiment with possibilities as well as with our own capabilities. If we could, then we would have no need for an anti-prison publication, because by now the prisons would have all been left in ruin.

The systems of social control are being fortified as the federal government continues to doll out massive funding to repressive institutions (such as the budget for security operations around the G8/G20 and Winter Olympics, as well as the one given to the Correctional Services of Canada in order to restructure the prison system). As each day passes, we find ourselves pushed into a foot chase. Every day we try to outrun the grips of prison and find joy in our pursuit of freedom. We are all *on the lam* within the existing social order and there is no place left to run. Prison is everywhere. The only escape we have left is an escape into rebellion; so that we may finally do away with this world of jailers and jails.

With this publication, we put forward some contributions, of thoughts and deeds, with the intention of turning our escape into a fierce revolt.

It's time we show our teeth

—Jeremy

The ink found on this paper, along with the ideas behind it, is for entertainment purposes only. Until the last prison wall is no longer standing, this information is not encouraging anyone to do anything illegal. -Ciao

where demonstrators yelled slogans and shouted through a megaphone. With the sale of this farmland, correctional services look to raise capital to finance prison construction.

May 18th, 2010: A Royal Bank of Canada branch was firebombed in Ottawa, Ontario. Royal Bank finances tar sands oil extraction in Alberta, the construction of new prisons like the Toronto South Detention Centre, and sponsored the 2010 Winter Olympic Games held on unceded native territory.

May 15th, 2010: A probation office was attacked with paint and stones in East Vancouver, British Columbia, during a street party against capitalist re-development.

May 1st, 2010: Canadian National Rail line blocked between Toronto and Montreal as an attack on the prison-world.

May 1st, 2010: Canadian National Rail line blocked northeast of Toronto, Ontario, as an attack on capitalism and an act of solidarity with anarchists facing state repression.

April 18th, 2010: A noise demonstration against prison and in solidarity with prisoners was held

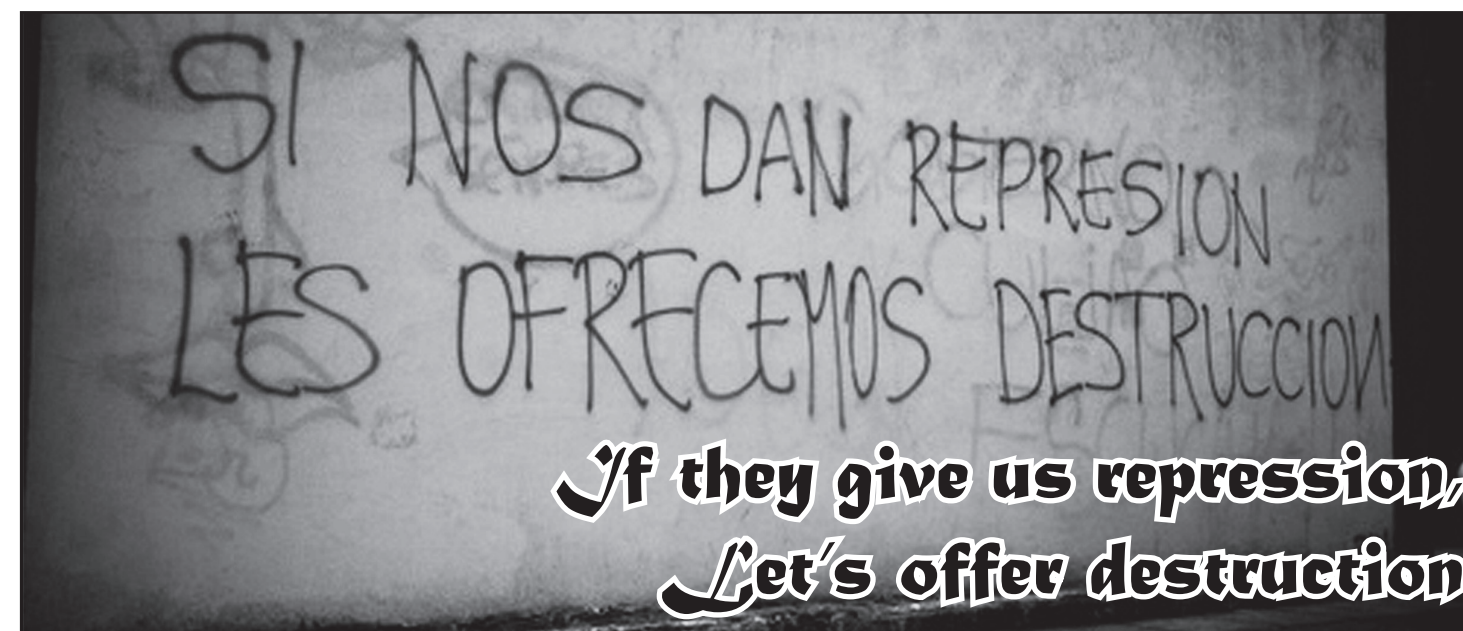
outside a super-jail in Milton, Ontario. Demonstrators spray-painted the sign at the entrance of the prison with anti-prison slogans, shouted slogans, made speeches, and set off fireworks.

March 15th, 2010: A demonstration was held against police brutality in Montreal, Quebec. Demonstrators attacked cops with stones, fireworks, paint, etc, and built barricades in the streets.

March 13th, 2010: A group of people attacked a police station in Montreal, Quebec. Eleven police cars suffered broken windows, slashed tires, and had their onboard computers smashed. The building itself was defaced with paint and had some windows broken.

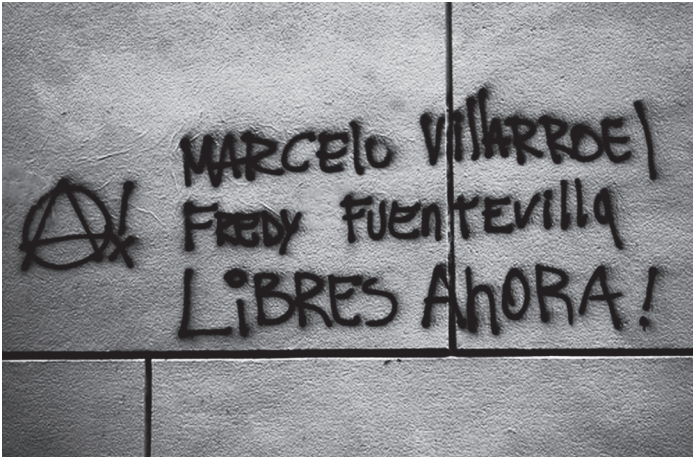
February 20th, 2010: An Automated Teller Machine (ATM) holding \$100,000 was stolen from the Metro Convention Centre in Toronto, Ontario. The centre hosted the G20 in June 2010.

January 1st, 2010: A noise demonstration against prison and in solidarity with anarchist prisoners on an international hunger strike was held at a jail in Hamilton, Ontario. Demonstrators made speeches, lifted a banner into the air with helium balloons, shouted slogans, honked their car horns, and set off fireworks.



Ottawa, and the people charged with conspiracy during the G20 in Toronto.

July 1st, 2010: People set fire to a truck belonging to a developer in East Vancouver, BC. The developer, Kiewit and Sons, build military infrastructure. This was done in solidarity with the rebellion in Toronto.



July 1st, 2010: A military recruitment centre in downtown Trois-Rivières, Quebec, was bombed.

June 27th, 2010: Two Bank of Montreal branches were attacked in Toronto. One had its windows broken and the other had windows smashed along with the ATM screen, the ATM card slot was also glued shut. This was done against the banks financial contributions to the construction of a new prison near Toronto. This action was claimed in solidarity with people fighting the G20 in Toronto.

June 26th, 2010: People broke the windows at a McDonalds and a Royal Bank of Canada branch in Calgary, Alberta. They also left messages in graffiti on the buildings they attacked. “No G8, No G20. These streets are our streets!”

June 26th, 2010: People marched in Solidarity with those acting against the G20 in Toronto. They marched down commercial drive and blocked traffic. There was some pushing and shoving with police. People were in contact over a telephone,

hearing about the destruction being wreaked in Toronto. Police blocked off access to the harbour in East Vancouver.

June 26th, 2010: A black bloc broke away from a demonstration against the G20 in Toronto, Ontario. They attacked police and torched around three of four police cruisers, they also smashed several other police vehicles. Over 40 storefronts were vandalized before the bloc disappeared into a large crowd. That night, looting and battles with the police continued in the areas left ruined by the bloc.

June 19th, 2010: People broke windows and wrote solidarity statements on walls of a Royal Bank of Canada branch in Montreal, QC, in solidarity with the three accused of firebombing a branch in Ottawa, Ontario.

June 7th, 2010: Windows broken at a Sodexo office in Montreal, Quebec. Sodexo is the parent company that makes food for Canadian prisons.

June 6th, 2010: Demonstrators marched to the correctional services regional headquarters in Kingston, Ontario, against the sale of prison farmland and the construction of super-prisons. A part of the march continued to Kingston Pen



This piece was taken from the “introductory note” to the text Locked Up, written by Alfredo M. Bonanno. Some spelling was altered but the content remains untouched.

Prison is the mainstay of the present society. Often it does not seem so, but it is.

Our permissive, educative society allows itself to be guided by enlightened politicians and is against any recourse to strong measures. It looks on scandalized at the massacres dotted all over the world map, and seems to be composed of so many respectable citizens whose only concerns are respecting nature and paying as little tax as possible. This society, which considers itself to be far beyond barbarity and horror, has prison on its very doorstep.

Now, the mere existence of a place where men and women are held locked up in opportunely equipped iron cages, watched over by other men and women wielding bunches of keys, a place

where human beings spend years and years of their lives doing nothing, absolutely nothing, is a sign of the utmost disgrace, not just for this society but for a whole historical era.

I am writing this introduction in Rebibbia prison and I don’t feel like changing a word of the talk that I gave in Bologna a few years ago. If I compare the thick-headedness of the prison institution today with that of my experiences recounted in the text published below, I see that nothing has changed.

Nothing could change. Prison is a sore that society tries in vain to conceal. Like the doctors in the seventeenth century who treated the plague by putting ointment on the sores but left rats running

around among the rubbish, today, at every level of the prison hierarchy technicians are trying to cover up this or that horrible aspect of prison, not realizing that the only way to face the latter is to destroy it. We must destroy all prisons and leave not one stone standing, not keep a few around in order to remember them in the way that humanity has done with other constructions that testify to the most atrocious infamy.

Now someone who tends to beat about the bush will ask: how can we destroy prison? How can we get rid of it completely in a society like this, where a bunch of bosses called the State decide for everybody and impose these decisions by force?

So, the best of these squawkers, the quick-witted with hearts of gold, try to mitigate prisoners' suffering by giving them cinema once a week, coloured TV, almost edible food, weekly visits, some hope of being released before the end of their sentence and everything else. Of course, these good people want something in exchange. After all, that's not asking too much. They want prisoners to behave and show respect to the warders, acquire the capacity to resist years and years of inactivity and sexual abstinence, undergo psychological treatment by specialized personnel and declare, more or less openly, that they have been redeemed and are capable of returning to the society that expelled them for misbehaving.

I have been a frequenter of prisons for more than a quarter of a century; so can compare a few things. Once prisoners literally lived in an infamous disgusting hole visited by rats and various other creatures. They only saw the light of day for a few minutes, did not have TV and could not even make a cup of coffee in their cells. The situation has certainly improved today. Prisoners [in Italy] can actually make meals, even cakes, in the cell. They have more hours' recreation in a day than they used to get in a month, and can have extra visits and make a few phone calls to the family.

They can work for a decent wage (half the average wage outside), watch colour TV, have a fridge, a shower and everything else.

Of course prisoners accept these improvements; they're not stupid. And why not. They also accept paying the price, by showing themselves to be good and condescending, arguing with the guards as little as possible and telling stories to the educators and psychologists who hang around the corridors like shadows, waiting for it to be time to go home and for the end of the month to pick up their salary. Apart from the obvious consequence of lowering the level of the clash in prisons, nobody in this scenario really believes that the prisoner will be re-inserted into so-called civil society. It is a farce that each player recites magnificently.



Let's take the priest for example. If he isn't stupid he knows perfectly well that all the prisoners who go to mass go to meet prisoners from other wings whom they wouldn't otherwise see. He accepts that with the hypocrisy of his trade and gets on with it. Of course, now and again some prisoner will show a sudden faith, enlightenment on the road to Damascus. But this, the priest knows perfectly well, is functional to the treatment for getting out on parole or having a suspended sentence or another of the many benefits provided for by the law but subordinate to the approval of the custodial personnel, educators, psychologists and also the priest.



July 8th, 2010: About 30 people marched to the Vanier and Maplehurst super-prison in Milton, ON, to take action against prison and to show solidarity with prisoners. The demonstrators carried banners, shot off fireworks, blasted music through a sound system, chanted slogans, and made speeches at several locations around the prison.

July 6th, 2010: In Montreal, QC, anarchists painted, and broke windows and ATMs at a bank in solidarity with the G20 resistance.

July 4th, 2010: Hundreds of people marched for three hours in Vancouver, BC, in solidarity with the resistance to the G20. Black masks were handed in a show of solidarity with the black bloc tactic, which left downtown Toronto broken and burning.

July 1st, 2010: People broke windows at a Royal Bank of Canada branch in Montreal, QC, to show their solidarity with the people charged or imprisoned for their participation in attacking the G20 in Toronto.

July 1st, 2010: One hundred people demonstrated their solidarity with the resistance to the G20 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, by blocking traffic, holding banners, and chanting slogans against prison and the world that needs them.

July 1st, 2010: Anarchists smashed windows at a Wells Fargo bank branch in Guelph, Ontario. This bank finances prisons for migrants. This attack was claimed in solidarity with everyone who resists exploitation, including the three accused of firebombing a Royal Bank of Canada branch in

Arabic, I answer by telling them to fuck off. Today I argued with a cop about the tv. I asked him to change the channel. The tv is up high. It's surrounded by bars and Plexiglass. We don't have access. He answered: 'But why do you want me to change the channel? Can't you just watch one channel?' The Cimade¹ works with the cops. For me, it's the same thing. When there are new arrivals, they ask them if they have lawyers, if they've made a demand for asylum. But they all function in the same system. They can't do anything for us. They aren't here to defend us or to help us get out.

Today, three people from the Algerian consulat came to try and recognize us. They spoke to me in Arabic. I told them that I didn't understand. They insisted; I answered that I didn't understand their gibberish. In any case, they do what they want, they don't do anything but stupidities.

To refuse being embarked, one guy got a crazy idea. He shit on himself. He spread it all over himself. They weren't able to deport him. They brought him back to the centre. They came to get him the next day. They tied him up with Scotch and wrapped him in plastic film. They took him and deported him like that. If they deport me, I will do everyhting to come back.

Someone was beaten in the infirmerie this weekend. He underwent leg surgery and needs to follow treatment; but the nurse didn't believe him. I was there to translate. She called the police by pressing a button under the desk. A dozen of them showed up. I tried to explain to the police that the man didn't do anything, but they grabbed and manhandled me. They took him and put him in isolation. He got out three hours later. A brigade of cops came to relieve that first brigade. He complained to them that the preceeding brigade hit him. They threw him around. They told him to make a complaint to the Cimade.

At 5:30 am, when we wanted to pray in the centre's

hallways, the CRS² came in with force. We told them that we could change locations, but they threw tear gas bombs. Those who were still asleep in their rooms began to cough. Faced with this, some people lit a fire in the centre. It wasn't the firefighters that interveened. They sent the CRS again."

¹ The Cimade is the only NGO that is allowed into dentention centres in France.

² Republican Security Company. Riot police that are allowed to intervene inside detention centres.

"I cannot say if it was the police or the detainees who started the fire. It's a public building, and it isn't good to burn a public building. There could have been deaths, but in terms of being a detainee, I am rejoicing that the centre caught fire."



What was clear when one was face to face with the police becomes hazy inside. Today nearly all prisoners are losing their identity as such and are accepting permissive changes that are gradually trapping them within a mechanism that promises not so much to redeem them as to let them out a little before the end of their time.

As the attentive reader of this little book will see, there is a line of reasoning that claims to want to 'abolish' prison. Now, to abolish means to ablate, i.e. eliminate, an essential component from society. Leaving things as they are, this abolition would be impossible or, if it were to come about, it would turn out to be in the interests of power.

Let's try to go into this. The only way to do something serious about prison is to destroy it. That is no more absurd or utopian than the thesis that wants to abolish it. In both cases the State, for which prison is essential, would have recourse to extreme measures. But specific conditions of a revolutionary character could make the destruction of prison possible. They could create the social and political upheaval that would make this utopia come true, due to the sudden absence of the power required for prison to continue to exist.

In the case of abolition, if it were to happen progressively it would mean that the State was providing for prison in a different way. In fact, something of the sort is actually happening. As I will show,



prisons are opening up. Political forces that were once quite cut off from them now enter them regularly. There are all kinds of cultural manifestations, cinema, theatre, painting, poetry; all these sectors are hard at work. This opening also requires the prisoners' participation. At first, participation seems to eliminate disparity, allowing everyone to be equal; it means that people don't have to stay locked up in cells all day and gives them the possibility to talk and make their demands heard. And this is true, in that the 'new' prison has taken the place of the 'old'. But not all prisoners are prepared to participate. Some still have their dignity as 'outlaws', which they don't want to lose, so they refuse.

I am not proposing the old distinction here between 'political' and 'common law' prisoners, which has never really convinced me. Personally I have always refused—and continue to do so now in the prison where I am writing this introduction—the label of 'political' prisoner. I am referring to the 'outlaws', those whose lives have been entirely dedicated to living against and beyond the conditions established by law. It is clear that if on the one hand prison is opening up to prisoners who are prepared to participate, it is closing down on those who are not and want to remain 'outlaws', even in prison.

Given the advances in control in society, the great potential of information technology in this field

and the centralization of the security services and the police, at least at the European level, we can well imagine that those going against the law in the not too distant future really will have the absolute determination of the outlaw.

We can sum up by saying that the project of power for the future is to abolish the traditional prison and open it up to participation, and at the same time create a new, absolutely closed version: a prison with white coats where the real outlaws will end their days. This is the prison of the future, and those who are talking about abolition will be happy, in that in the future these prisons with white coats might not even be called by such a hateful name, but rather clinics for mental patients. Isn't someone who insists on rebelling and affirming their identity as an 'outlaw' in defiance of all propositions to participate in society, absolutely mad? And do mad people perhaps not constitute a medical rather than a penitentiary problem?

Such a society, having a greater capacity for social and political control, would call for everyone to collaborate in this repressive project, so would have less need to have recourse to sentencing. The very concept of sentencing would be put in question. Basically, most of the prison population today are people who have committed 'crimes' such as taking drugs, drug dealing, petty theft, administrative offences, etc., which from one moment to the next might no longer be considered such. By removing these people from prison and reducing the probability of more serious offences such as robbery and kidnapping through increased levels of social control, few actual real crimes will remain. Crimes of passion could very well be dealt with through recourse to house arrest, and that is the intention. And so, who would remain in prison under such conditions? The few thousand individuals who refuse to accept this project, who hate such a choice and refuse to obey or put themselves down. In a word, conscious rebels who continue to attack, perhaps against all logic, and against whom it will

be possible to apply specific conditions of detention and 'cure' closer to that of an asylum than an actual prison. That is where the logical premise of prison abolition leads us in the last analysis. The State could very well espouse this thesis at some time in the not too distant future.

Prison is the most direct, brutal expression of power, and like power it must be destroyed, it cannot be abolished progressively. Anyone who thinks they can improve it now in order to destroy it in the future will forever be a captive of it.

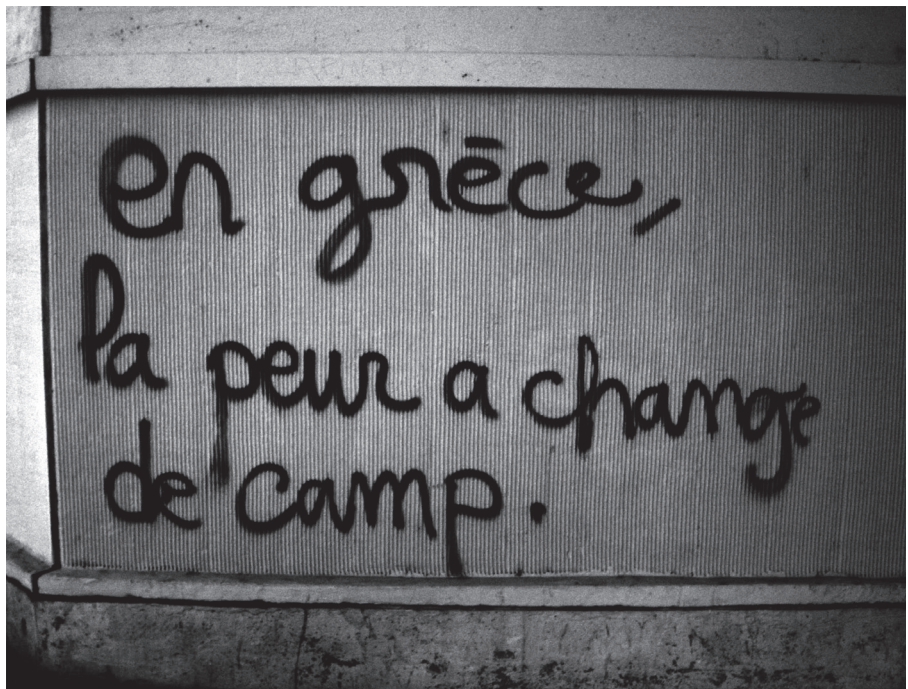
The revolutionary project of anarchists is to struggle along with the exploited and push them to rebel against all abuse and repression, so also against prison. What moves them is the desire for a better world, a better life with dignity and ethic, where economy and politics have been destroyed. There can be no place for prison in that world.



That is why anarchists scare power
That is why they are locked up in prison

Alfredo M. Bonanno
Rebibbia prison, 20 March 1997.

We must reconsider the struggle. The public and the cops don't care about the hunger strike. The don't give a fuck about the non-status migrants. They couldn't care less if we died. People swallow razor blades every day and we don't hear a thing about them. The little tricks we're doing aren't worth it. We have to really fuck things up to put concrete pressure on them. When I was outside, I worked. I went to drink a couple glasses after work. I went out with friends. I couldn't care less about anything else. When I opened a newspaper, I was only interested in the big stories. For the public, it's the same. Things have to explode before they get interested in us.



The people who enter this place don't have a chance. I have two lawyers, I write letters but the judges couldn't care less. They have objectives to attain. They aren't looking to understand. Even if you aren't deported, you stay thirty-two days. When you're released, you've lost everything. You no longer have an apartment because you couldn't pay rent. You no longer have a job because you weren't able to go. Many amongst us can't read or write in french. When they go to see the doctor for a headache, they're given anti-psychotic pills that would knock out an elephant. One man slept twenty-four hours after taking them! They do this to keep us from thinking. I counsel others not to take the pills without having seen the box. The doctors must write a prescription so a trace exists of what they've given. But people don't know this.

Many of the cops in here are the children of immigrants. They try to befriend us so that we remain passive. When they come to me speaking

received a back injury during the altercation. Earlier in the week, two guards got into a fight with an inmate. One guard was punched in the face and her eye swelled shut. The other received seven stitches behind the ear and had bite marks on his back.

February 7th 2008: Orsainville Jail (QC)

Two days after the Quebec government declared its smoking ban inside and outside prisons, 70 inmates set fires in their cells. The next day, the Provincial Public Safety Minister Jacques Dupuis immediately reversed the decision in order to allow smoking outside the buildings.

January 25th 2008: Matsqui Institution (BC)

Around 170 prisoners at the facility in Abbotsford refused to return to the living unit, and set blazes in the yard – burning garbage, foliage, and a gazebo. A negotiator and an emergency response team were deployed to manage the situation.

January 1st 2008: Hull Detention Centre (QC)

About 15 prisoners refused to return to their cells. Instead they damaged doors, windows, and their cells before being controlled by guards. Pepper spray was used to put down the revolt, and ten inmates were later transferred to other prisons.





FROM THE INSIDE: Communication from the Administrative Detention Centre of Vincennes

Wednesday April 9th, 2008

Communication from a prisoner held in Administrative Detention Centre 1 of the Vincennes Detention Centre.

“The hunger strike has finished in both sides of the centre. Some groups are eating. People are fed up. Each person is either preparing for their appearance before the courts or their exit, it’s no longer collective. Everything’s finished, and in the end nothing came from it. We continue to meet, even though we no longer see the people who organized the initial struggle. The cops have transferred the fortes têtes into another unit.

One morning at 4 am, those who were going to be deported woke us up when passing through the rooms. The cops located them thanks to their cameras. They put two people into isolation. I saw one of them at the tribunal in the city, during my appearance. When they brought him that morning, there were five of them on him. They put him in a cell with toilets. He broke everything inside. He also broke the camera. The cops flipped out. They went and knocked on the door, but he didn’t answer. They thought that he was trying to commit suicide. He was scared that they’d hit him. He made a knife and waited for them to open the door. The commander intervened. He went to talk to him and put him in a room with three others.



“When you know that you’re serving a life sentence, it isn’t just one day after another, no, every day you serve the life term in full, with the memories that anticipate, more and more, your future suffering. This solidification of hours, when they crystallize into a frozen glass... turns life into a disease... It’s the most terrible institution of our era, this justice, tired of outbidding the crime it pretends to punish; it no longer crucifies, tears apart, skins, impales, brands, and even, beheads. There is no longer the iron, the wheel, the gallows, the stake, or anything. What replaces them is time. Life amputated by time! This is prison: time imposed in its nakedness. We no longer kill, we let die.”

—Serge Coutel

Anti-prison initiatives coming from outside the walls of prison have begun to take form and gather momentum in parts of the territory known as Kanada. For our projects to continue developing with a keen analysis and practice, prison needs to

be understood; our initiatives lose their effectiveness and ferocity when we don’t understand the reality we wish to fight. By analyzing the history of prisons in Kanada, we can come to a broader understanding of the function of the existing prison system, its restructuring, the ideas that founded it, and some of the struggles taken against it—to better sharpen the strategy for our actions.

Before prisons in Kanada, there was law and police, punishment and social control. The first police force in Kanada was founded in 1729 in Newfoundland. The website for the Correctional Services of Canada (CSC) explains that at that time “[outlaws] could be whipped or branded; they could be put in pillories or stocks and made to stand for hours or days on display out in the open. Other times, convicts were simply sent away, transported or banished to other countries and left to fend for themselves.” Prison is just an evolution in the methods used to punish and control people.



The first penitentiary opened in Canada, taking in six prisoners, on June 1st 1835 in Kingston Ontario. Other prisons were later created in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in 1841 and 1844, respectively. The first prisons characterized a shift or advancement in the methods of social control, away from the old model of humiliation and physical abuse and toward a more insidious and total form of punishment.

In 1833, before the construction of the first prison, a committee of three Kingston colonials issued a report calling for the construction of a limestone penitentiary on Hatter's Bay to the west of the town. As Peter H. Hennessy explains in his book *Canada's Big House: The Dark History of the Kingston Penitentiary*: "their report contained these words of advice for [the penitentiary's] future governors: '[it shall] be a place by every means not cruel and not affecting the health of the offender, [but] shall be rendered so irksome and so terrible that during his lifetime he may dread nothing so much as a repetition of the punishment...'"

Hugh Armstrong further describes some of the conditions within the prison around 1860 in his essay *Convict Deaths at the Kingston Penitentiary 1835-1915*. "In the early years of the Penitentiary, convicts were treated rather harshly. They were required to be silent from the time they left their cells

in the morning to the evening lock-up, including meals and at work." The advancement of punishment, which arrived with the prison structure was a step towards the complete institutional control of another person's body and mind, breaking her will and humanity, rather than just breaking his back. The application of prison, like punishment, is not static but always in movement.

A Constant Tension

"Even if prisons were transformed from human storerooms into luxury hotels, even if the prisoners of all prisons are satisfied with 'reduced sentences', even if the everyday beatings of prisoners are replaced by sly agreements and assimilated by correctional policies in accordance with the 'human rights' model, even if the 'white cells' turn 'pink', and heroin gives way to methadone we will remain forever enemies of every structure that denies us our freedom. We will be the rebels inside your luxury hotels and the arsonists of legal justice. We will be eternal fighters in love with freedom. Better prison conditions mean nothing more than improved conditions of captivity. For us the issue remains in its essence. That is, the condition of captivity in itself."

-Yiannis Dimitrakis, Yiorgos Voutsis-Vogiatzis, Polykarpos Georgiadis



In June 2008, the largest prison for migrants, known as the Administrative Detention Centre of Vincennes was burned to the ground by its prisoners. Ten detainees were arrested and charged for the fire. Their court hearing was in late January 2010. Above is a poster that was made in solidarity with the revolt and the desire to burn every prison to the ground.

A book, written in 2008, called *Feu aux centres de rétention* is currently being translated into english. It chronicles the revolt and life of prisoners on the inside. What follows is an excerpt from the book.

roof of the open-concept prison, fearing for their lives until backup came with shotguns to put down the riot.

February 26th 2008: Port-Cartier Institution (QC)

Around 13 prisoners refused to return to their cells after guards seized tobacco from a prisoner. Pepper spray was used and an emergency response team was deployed to manage the situation.

February 15th 2008: Millhaven Institution (ON)

The prison went on lockdown for over a week after a prisoner assaulted a guard, fires were set in a maximum-security area, and a weapon was found in the kitchen.

February 9th 2008: Fraser Regional Correctional Centre (BC)

In the second riot in six months, angry prisoners set fires, broke windows and smashed up their cells. It took nearly four hours for tactical teams to put down the revolt. On August 9th 2007, over 30 inmates ran riot, causing extensive damage to a living unit. Sprinkler heads were broken off, which resulted in flooding. Windows were attacked with metal pipes. Prisoners had access to other areas through a ventilated pipe shaft. Eventually they had access to elevators and caused around \$300,000 in damage before tactical teams arrived to put down the rebellion.

February 7th 2008: Moncton Detention Centre (NB)

Prisoners refused to return to their cells after supper. This resulted in a brawl between several inmates and guards. All available guards arrived on scene to deal with the prisoners. One guard

“But the bomb?” cry the judges in and out of court. The bomb is the echo of your cannon, trained upon our starving brothers; it is the cry of the wounded striker; ‘tis the voice of hungry women and children; the shriek of those maimed and torn in your industrial slaughterhouses; it is the dull thud of the policeman’s club upon a defenseless head; ‘tis the shadow of the crisis, the rumbling of suppressed earthquake –it is manhoods lightning out of an atmosphere of degradation and misery that king, president and plutocrat have heaped upon humanity. The bomb is the ghost of your past crimes.

You may foam and legislate, arrest, imprison, and deport. You may still further tighten the thumbscrews

of persecution, erect more gallows, and build electric chairs. Pitiful fools! Thus was Christ crucified as a disturber of “Caesar’s peace.” Did Golgotha suppress his teaching? Have the unspeakable tortures of the Inquisition eradicated free thought? Did Louis the XVI save his crown –or his head– by *lettre de cachet*?¹ Has the cause of the Abolitionist’s been exterminated by the judicial murder of John Brown?

“Our graves will speak louder than the voices you strangle.” In spite of all the strenuous governmental, capitalistic, and journalistic efforts to misrepresent and suppress Anarchists [...] –because of those efforts– the people will yet learn the truth.

- Alexander Berkman, 1904

¹ Letters signed by the king of France, countersigned by one of his ministers, and closed with the royal seal, or cachet. The best-known lettres de cachet, were penal, by which a subject was sentenced without trial and without an opportunity of defense to imprisonment in a state prison or an ordinary jail, confinement in a convent or a hospital, transportation to the colonies, or expulsion to another part of the realm.



By the 1920’s, prisons were facing significant scrutiny from segments of the public. This was in part because of the first warden at Kingston Pen, Henry Smith, who was seen as the one responsible for a lot of the abuses that took place for years in the prison. “Women and children as young as eight were flogged. As well, [inmates were punished] ... with shackling, solitary confinement, bread-and-water diets, darkened cells, submersion in water, 35-pound yokes, and imprisonment in ‘the box,’ an upright coffin.” By this time, the prison reform movement was well underway and Kanada’s first reform prison, which opened in 1911 in Guelph Ontario, had had ample time to try and rehabilitate its captives.

The Great Depression of 1929 only aggravated the situation in prisons. By 1933, more than a quarter of all working people in the country lost their jobs and in some cases their homes. Meanwhile, large conflicts took place between bosses and workers all across the country, which were heavily repressed by police. Prisons were being filled to the brim with people imprisoned in the daily austerity and repression of social struggles. While prison populations grew during the Depression, there was little money available to expand existing facilities or open new ones. Some construction went on, such as the prison for women in Kingston, which was built in 1934. Even so, overcrowding created significant tensions. These tensions eventually erupted into full-scale riots.

The first occurred at Kingston Pen in 1932 and lasted six days. Fifteen others took place in penitentiaries and reform prisons across the country over the following five years. In 1937, prisoners in Kanada’s first reform prison destroyed all of its inner doors and walls during a massive prison riot. This was the first time the prison system was shaken by such widespread revolt coming from inside its walls.

For the people protected by prisons, something

needed to be done. Medicare and Unemployment Insurance were created as social safety nets to try to calm the rebellions outside the prison walls. After federal elections in 1935, the new government established the Archambault Commission to look into the prison problem. After the Second World War, the first prison commissioner implemented 100 of the commission’s recommendations: new prisons were built for young males, which segregated prisoner populations; a formal training was also administered for prison guards; and prisoners were given small reforms that allowed them to take up hobbies and sports. These measures, however, didn’t solve their prison problem.

Overcrowding intensified as the number of inmates climbed steadily over time. Between 1947 and 1960 alone, the national offender population almost doubled from 3,362 to 6,344. In 1952, the second-largest prison revolt that the Kanadian state had ever seen took place in the Ontario Reformatory in Guelph. For two days, some 600 of the 931 prisoners went riot, nearly destroying that disgusting cage. On August 15th 1954, 200 of the almost 1,000 inmates in the Kingston Penitentiary rioted and set fire to the old prison, destroying its central dome.

In April 1971, the largest prison riot in Kanada’s history broke out at Kingston Pen. Prisoners refused being locked up with inmate “undesirables,” including sex offenders and informants. These undesirables were dragged from their cells, tied up and tortured on the dome floor of the penitentiary. Two died and most of the prison was ruined before this four-day riot ended. The Kingston riot sparked a decade of unrest and significant tension in penitentiaries in Kanada. Destructive, large-scale rioting happened all over the country: some examples are at Millhaven, in Ontario 1976; Archambault in Quebec 1982; Prince George Regional Correctional Centre in British Columbia 1983; Joyceville in Ontario 1987; Kingston Pen in Ontario 1988; Kingston’s Prison for Women in

Ontario 1994; Headingly in Manitoba 1996; Millhaven again in 1997; and so forth. The chronology doesn't end there, as riots in prison are still a common occurrence (see *Unrest in Prisons Across Kanada*, for more recent examples).

It was during this period of riots that “offender rights” were recognized. Prisoners’ actual names replaced the impersonal ‘number’ system. Inmates could now write as many letters as they wished – increasing their connection with the outside world. Long-time forms of punishment, such as whipping and lashing of prisoners, were eliminated. The death penalty was also abolished in 1976.

The Swackhamer Inquiry following the Kingston Pen riot put “depressing and dehumanizing” conditions of imprisonment at the top of its list of potential factors that caused the riot. The inquiry concluded by saying that “such a regime does a real injustice to a human being and is destructive of whatever humanity may be within him.” What the inquiry doesn't mention is how the relentless revolts against the condition of prison are about the most dignified expressions of humanity these individuals could share with each other from within the stomach of the prison machine. In a similar vein, how did the authors of this inquiry expect to nurture someone's humanity by maintaining sterile forms of detention? These structures can't serve any purpose other than the ones they were designed to carry out: a church, desecrated or not, will always be the house of god.


The history of prisons in Kanada is an uninterrupted struggle to make improvements in the efficiency of the management and control of others; while these others seek to become unmanageable, to undermine this control, and destroy its origin. The form of incarceration was never the problem. Dark dungeon or decadent dorm, the problem is not with the form but with the content. Like the riots in the “humane” reform prisons have shown us, the conflict lies with the incarceration itself.

The Gears of Control

“What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A ‘political anatomy’, which was also a ‘mechanics of power’, was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile’ bodies.”

-Michel Foucault

According to the Correctional Services of Canada (CSC) and *prisonjustice.ca*, there are now well over 190 prisons, as well as hundreds of administrative offices (community corrections, probation offices, parole offices, etc) in Kanada. Correctional Services operate 5 regional headquarters spread throughout the Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairie and Pacific regions. Its national headquarters is located in Ottawa. In 2006, 153 000 individuals were under the supervision of Kanada's Correctional Services, 33 440 adults were locked up in provincial and federal custody (close to 10 000 of whom were awaiting their trial/sentencing), and 182 prisoners died in prison.



preserve things as they are? Is it indeed worthwhile?

[...]

To support, defend, and perpetuate [the] unjust and terrible conditions [under which we live], it is necessary to have police, prisons, laws, and government. For the disinherited are not content to forever starve in the midst of plenty, and the exploited are beginning to cry out against their cruel bondage.

These cries, these signs of rebellious dissatisfaction must be stifled. That is the mission of law and government: to preserve things as they are; to secure to the rich their stolen wealth; to strangle the voice of popular discontent.

Such is the social life of “civilized” countries. A life of misery and degradation, economic exploitation, governmental suppression, lawful brutality, judicial murder. Sham, injustice, and tyranny are the symptoms of organized society. Shall we preserve it as it is? Is it necessary and desirable? Is it even possible?



“But you can't regenerate society by violence...” the well-meaning people argue. Indeed, full well we know we cannot. Be fair; give ear. Do not confound the philosophy of a better, freer, and happier life with an act resulting from the very evils which that philosophy seeks to abolish.

[...]

April 3rd 2008: Mission (BC)

A man who was being transported as part of an ongoing investigation escaped from police custody. While he was standing outside a police cruiser in the company of a couple coppers, he managed to jump into a moving pick-up truck as it sped away.

April 3rd 2008: Central Nova Scotia Correctional Centre (NS)

A man, who was being transported from a jail in Dartmouth to a medical appointment, freed himself from his leg shackles, jumped out of a transport van, and evaded recapture.

March 31st 2008: Joyceville Institution (ON)

At 9:30 PM prisoners started smashing furniture, flooding cells, setting fires and attempting to smash through walls and barred barriers. Prison bosses handed out shotguns to staff and called in a prison riot squad, who shot tear gas to control the riot. The riot lasted five hours and cause \$25,000 in damage.

March 30th 2008: Mountain Institution (BC)

After breaking into a storage room in the gymnasium, around 60 rampaging inmates armed with baseball bats and fire hoses seized control of the jail. They flooded areas of the prison; smashed up cells, control posts, computers, and even the panel that controlled cell locks. Two inmates died, including a child molester who was beaten to death for informing on others and then laughing about it. The other inmate died of a drug overdose. Twenty-two prison staff fled to the



Edited from Violence and Anarchism by Alexander Berkman (Mother Earth, vol III. No 2. 1908). All edits are in square brackets.

*Cette voix qui crie «insurrection»!
C'est nos frères, nos enfants, nos maris,
Nos compagnons, nos camarades, nos amis.
Ceux qui n'ont que la violence
Pour briser le mur du silence...*

It is growing rather monotonous to hear the cry of “Anarchist conspiracy” raised wherever there happens an “unlawful” shot or bomb explosion.

Let us consider the matter dispassionately. Is violence specifically Anarchistic? Is the taking of human life such a very unusual occurrence among “civilized” peoples? Is our whole social existence anything but an uninterrupted series of murder, assassination, eradication? All our honored institutions are rooted in the very spirit of murder. Do

we build war ships for educational purposes? Is the army a Sunday school? Our police, jails, and penitentiaries —what purpose do they serve but to suppress, kill, and maim? Is the gallows the symbol of our brotherhood, the electric chair the proof of our humanitarianism?

“All these things are necessary evils,” we are told by the self-satisfied. True, they are necessary to preserve society as it is. But has it ever occurred to the “good citizen” whether it is really necessary to

The CSC has played a part in the creation and advancement of prison systems around the world. It helped to establish the prison system in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. CSC trained and “mentored” the prison guards of the Haitian state, thus collaborating in the repression of social movements at home and abroad.

In 2006, a system known as the Offender Management System (OMS) was implemented to enable a more efficient sharing of information between the CSC and other forms of law enforcement. “OMS ensures that CSC informs police services about offenders released under condition in their communities and those who are unlawfully at large. OMS also allows CSC to provide Passport Canada with electronic information on individuals who may not be eligible for Passport Canada’s services.” This technological advancement only tightens state control over the lives of anyone charged, out on bail or recognizance, and not necessarily convicted with a criminal offence. It moves the reach of prison beyond its walls and into everyday life: crossing borders, taking a plane, or walking any street policed by pigs, anywhere. Prison is at the same time a finite, tangible structure and a fluid, indeterminate idea —but always a reality.

Regarding the Economy

“When the boys on the top floor of the First National speak everybody listens. Defense lawyers may play a little racquetball with the prosecutors but judges play golf with the people who count the money”

—Stephen Reid

It’s impossible to analyze the changes in the penal system without understanding the social context within which they develop. Prisons are not separate from the society that needs them. Anyone who isolates prison from its context, as an issue that stands on its own, turns prison into something it

isn’t and build their critiques from there —but the critique of a caricature is nothing more than the caricature of a critique.

In the past handful of years, we’ve seen the world economy buckle at the knees. What began to crash in Ontario was not bankers or investors falling like rain from high-rise windows onto cold remorseless concrete, but the manufacturing sector of this industrialized state. Automobile manufacturers, steel manufacturers, car part plants, refrigerator factories, and so forth, have each laid-off hundreds of people from their sense of stability and security. Workers have gone on strike throughout Ontario: Oshawa, Oakville, Sudbury, Hamilton, London, Windsor, Brantford, etc. While most of these strikes have not lasted very long, the strike at Vale-Inco in Sudbury has been ongoing since July 2009. Others like the strike in June 2008 at General Motors in Oshawa had workers coming close to taking wildcat action.



The tactics in these labour disputes have also started to escalate, as seen in the factory occupations in Windsor, back in March of 2009. After a week of demonstrations, recently laid-off workers at the Aradco and Aramco factories defied a court injunction, occupied their ex-workplace, welded themselves inside the factory, and managed to block the police and owner from getting in to make arrests and retrieve the parts and tools

that were kept within. In the end, the union convinced the workers to take the limits of their logic as gospel truth, end the strike, and accept a measly severance pay of \$5000 per head.



Conflict like this will not stop as long as the bosses continue to lay-off their workforce and close their businesses to save their profits. Remembering the Great Depression, the government seems to have prepared some measures to safeguard itself from the potential of further conflict.

The story isn't all that different anywhere else. We've witnessed the US government give massive bailouts (of taxpayer dollars) to the banks, as these financial institutions continue to evict families and repossess their homes. As foreclosure follows fore-

closure, more and more people are being sung the same monotonous melody: this year's international top-ten hit by state and capital "the rich ain't gonna suffer this crisis." However some disagree, like members of the Miwok Tribe who barricaded themselves in their homes and fought eviction. In January 2010, they successfully warded off a planned eviction from California county sheriffs. Until this landless tribe manages to acquire a large tract of land, small in comparison to the territories they used to occupy, the house in Stockton California is the only space they have left to defend.

In France, the unemployment rate has risen to 10% and many people are resisting layoffs by revolting against the bosses, taking them hostage or occupying their workplaces. In April 2010 in Crepy-en-Valois, workers occupied a factory, set fire to the products of their labour, and threatened to blow up the building after placing petrol bombs near a large gas tank. An abundance of other examples is not hard to find: everywhere people are becoming conscious of, and acting accordingly to, the precarious situation being pushed on them by government and bosses.

You Don't Need Barbed-Wire and Bars to Build a Prison

"Prisons should also be attacked in the context of the struggle in general, that is, in the course of any struggle we manage to undertake... No matter what we are doing, or what we are talking about, we must make prison a part of it, because prison is central to any discourse."

-Alfredo M. Bonnano

The Greek state is nearly bankrupt with an economy that no longer functions. Following the advice of the European Union (EU), the ruling socialist party has called for a series of economic measures and restructuring. The ministers swear it will take blood, sweat, and tears, but "it's the only option."

the outside movement's determination and strength. In this way, we're not only deceiving imprisoned comrades, but first of all, we're deceiving ourselves. The result is bitterness and aversion, inside and outside.

Finally, we also think that we should do everything to avoid that the struggle against prison and solidarity with imprisoned comrades is detached from other struggles. We have to look for possibilities and occasions to insert the question of prison in other struggles and vice versa. Concretely, it has always seemed absurd to not combine the struggle against prison with the struggle against detention centres for illegalized people. It puts us in a dead end to only talk to prisoners about prison, we should also bring up other aspects of dominion, and we should talk about everything that includes our anarchist perspective. Even though this can sometimes lead to ruptures (what we wish to do with money is not likely to appeal to many thieves). In this sense, we are very aware of the limits of a publication like La Cavale and we take it as a challenge to surmount those limits. On the other hand, La Cavale has always been a – moderate – instrument in our activity around the ongoing agitation in Belgian prisons, because we have never considered counter-information and analyses as an ending point but only as a first step, a start.

We want to continue in the direction that always seemed the most fertile: basing our relations on shared perspectives in relation to the struggle against prison, on real affinity, and not on an image that keeps eroding itself irrevocably. That's why we've decided to stop using the logo Anarchist Black Cross. We see this not as a step backwards or a step back but as a step forward to further deepen and sharpen our project, a project that is directed towards prison and its world and that connects with the agitation in Belgian prisons and the every day struggle of imprisoned comrades.

Ex-"Anarchist Black Cross Antwerp"

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AR15 assault rifles, and pepper spray was used to put down the rebellion. The prisoners went on strike, refusing to work or participate in programs, until July 14th when they ended their revolt. No concessions were made regarding the smoking ban.

July 2nd 2008: Drummondville Institution (QC)

Prisoners went on work strike and refused to participate in programs in protest of a new smoking ban. A week later, around 51% of the strikers voted to end the strike. Some were threatened with transfers, and those that were soon to be admissible for conditional release were threatened with disciplinary opinions written on their files.

July 1st 2008: Edmonton Institution (AB)

A major knife fight broke out in the yard, and guards wearing riot gear moved in on the prisoners who by then refused to return to their cells. Tear gas and eventually live rounds were fired; a bullet struck one prisoner. Prisoners set a large sweat lodge on fire. After the fighting ended and the wounded were taken to the hospital, 40 inmates still refused to return to their cells. It took six canisters of tear gas to contain them.

May 26th 2008: Springhill Institution (NS)

Prisoners refused to work or participate in programs in protest of the new smoking ban that came into effect on May 20th as well as to protest against a broken drug scanner, which was turning away visitors. The prisoners voted to end the strike on June 23rd.



spectacle with only spectators and the imprisoned comrades are often detached of their struggle's context and ideas.

Solidarity cannot be reduced to the "spreading of information." We understand solidarity as a permanent attempt or tension to, on the one hand continue the struggle of the imprisoned comrades, and on the other hand to actively involve prisoners in discussions and in struggles outside... To use a slogan that's content has been so eroded in many "anti-prison milieus": "Our solidarity is not charity." Indeed, our solidarity is based on a shared revolt, shared ideas, and shared perspectives. That's for us the starting point and one of the only ways to fight against the isolation that the State tries to impose on certain comrades.

From this angle, the question of "political" and "social" prisoners could be undermined. It's not enough to proclaim that there wouldn't be a difference. The only criterion that we want to use for our solidarity is whether we share something of revolt or ideas with certain prisoners (detained for revolutionary or survival practices). In this sense, we made the choice not to twist and turn in order to express specific solidarity with impris-



oned members of authoritarian groups or famous "criminals" whose criticizable aspects are persistently put aside. We think that the choice to base solidarity on shared revolt offers more possibility than other choices towards putting forward in a clear way the anarchist perspective of the destruction of prison and its world; not only towards other prisoners, but also towards the oppressed and excluded in the street.

While some circles' demagoguery of "political prisoners" makes us puke ever more, on the anarchist side, it sometimes seems to incline towards the contrary. Every prisoner that rebels is put on a pedestal and gets the label of "social rebel." This is a logical consequence of the detrimental mentality of not leaving from an own, autonomous perspective, but attempting to obstinately discover "subjects" everywhere. We try to develop a struggle of our own, even with few, with a clear basis and practice. We no longer want to fool ourselves by putting labels, no matter where they fall. Moreover, the image that is given of certain prisoners impeaches any real discussion, and thus any development of a shared perspective. Prisoners are made into something that is put above us, and to the inside we send a complete falsified image of



Since January 2010, the people, who know that they are the ones who will pay the price for this restructuring, have frequently blocked roads, harbours, airports, borders, factories, railroads, etc. Demonstrations follow each other and not a single politician seems capable of calming the protests. Heavy rioting with the police occurs and hundreds of acts of sabotage, arsons, and bomb attacks point their destructive energy toward the state structures and the economy –toward all expressions of authority.

The states around the world sense that something is up: there is an unmistakable tremble in the voices of EU politicians regarding the uprisings in Greece. They're worried that their citizens might all of a sudden throw off the yoke of their resignation and stop accepting the misery served to them each day. It's not a coincidence that the police are now pulling the trigger over faster and in a more decided way, murdering anarchists like Lambros Foundas (a comrade, part of the group Revolutionary Struggle and involved for over a decade in anti-authoritarian struggle, who was gunned down in the streets of Athens on March 10th, 2010 while stealing a car), nor is it a coincidence that a new

detention centre for migrants and seven new prisons are being built in Belgium, no less than 2000 kilometers away. They are safeguarding themselves against our anger and the possibilities it creates.

In Kanada, it's no different. Along with the job losses and the wealth being redistributed by government tax breaks back to the ones who count the money, the penal system is in the process of undergoing a large-scale restructuring.

Reviewing the Efficiency of Control

"I'm tired of seeing the amateur murderer condemned by professional assassins. It's enough to vomit, it's enough to cry, it's enough to wish the end of the world."

-Serge Coutel

This restructuring took form in April of 2007, when then-Minister of Public Safety Stockwell Day created a panel to conduct a sweeping review of the penal system. Sitting on this panel was Serge Gascon, an ex-cop from Montreal who also held several government positions; Ian Glen, the chair of

The Roadmap also recommends the elimination of statutory release. Statutory release means that after two-thirds of a sentence has been served, and barring “bad behaviour,” a prisoner is automatically released under supervision into the rest of society for the remainder of the sentence. The review panel argues that early release is something one has to earn. Not being “bad” isn’t enough, they want a prisoner to act “good,” jump through hoops, and accept changes in their daily routines in order to get a carrot.

Not surprisingly, the existing Conservative government unconditionally endorsed every single

In 2005, legislation concerning the DNA databank already began to change to add new crimes to its scope. However, some of these “secondary designated offences” still require the Crown to apply for the DNA sample and prove its necessity in court. Still, the Roadmap pushes for greater changes: mandatory DNA data banking of anyone convicted of a federal offense, regardless of

A large black and white photograph capturing a moment of civil unrest during the MuchMusic Video Awards ceremony. The scene is set in front of a large, ornate building with classical architectural features. The building's facade is prominently displayed with 'MUCHMUSIC' logos and signs for the 'MUCHMUSIC VIDEO AWARDS' ceremony, which is scheduled for 'FRIDAY JUNE 24 8pm'. A massive crowd of protesters, many wearing dark clothing and balaclavas, fills the foreground and middle ground. Several individuals are holding up flags, including one with a circular logo. In the lower foreground, a man with a beard and a white headband looks towards the camera. To the right, a line of police officers in full riot gear, including helmets and shields, stands in formation, facing the crowd. The atmosphere is charged, with smoke or dust visible in the air.

The so-called struggle against prison sometimes resembles more a sort of anti-repression activism. Information has become the only goal and the diffusers of information are the guardians of solidarity. And this information loses more and more of its meaning, because there's less and less use made of it. It's not being discussed, nor thought about how blows against comrades could be forged into an intensification of the struggle. The only thing that seems to matter is the diffusing of the information that stands on itself, and there the logos also flourish abundantly. One repressive story follows the next, the blow against the movement is consumed as a

Two prisoners tried to escape by sneaking onto the gymnasium roof. They attached a homemade grappling hook made of metal clamps with a rope, composed of shoelaces and wire, onto a razor-wire fence.

A man escaped by impersonating another inmate in court. He was recaptured two days later with the collaboration of a gas station attendant.

Well over 100 inmates refused to return to their cells, preferring to spend their time in the yard or gymnasium. The walkout was staged in protest of increased drug surveillance at the prison, including random cell searches and the use of sniffer dogs and ion scanners to detect contraband. The next day they are all searched and the prison is put on lockdown.

Prisoners refused to return to their cells. It took seven hours and the prison's incident response team to get the prisoners placed in lockdown. After the revolt, there was damage to lights and cell door windows.

Around 50 prisoners ran riot in protest to a new smoking ban in prisons, breaking windows and attempting to break into the section of the prison reserved for prisoners with “disciplinary sanctions.” Guards were deployed with



It's a well-known topic. Revolutionaries have always been confronted with it and will probably always be. It's about the tension between analyzing the reality of the struggle and the methods of organization and struggle that you make your own. It's also about the evidence that almost every method of organization that is not based on reciprocal knowledge, affinity and informality ends with producing a caricature and stimulating certain detrimental behaviours. Even more, it is impossible to separate the question of organization from the content of a specific project or perspective.

It's in this much-schematized order that we want to clarify some of our choices and ideas. We don't intend to point the finger towards comrades or to deny the natural development of certain dynamics

(meaning time, experiences and mistakes). On the other hand, we're only deceiving ourselves if we wouldn't dare to criticize certain problematic realities within what one could call, with some good will, the "anarchist movement." Maybe our ideas differ with a number of comrades that struggle on the same terrain (prison in all its forms) and then it's good that these differences find their expression. On this theme, a series of texts and critiques have circulated that inspired us in the development of our project. We hope that the different comrades, each of them in his context and with her ideas, can use these experiences and considerations to sharpen their project.

It's not a coincidence that the social ice age we're living in at the moment also has its consequences within the anarchist movement. Seeing the lack

recommendation in the Roadmap, and created a taskforce for its implementation: the Transformation Team (Suzanne LaPlante, Mary Beth Wolicky, Julie Blasko, Chris Price, Morris Zbar, Brenda LePage, Jim LaPlante, Denise Mainville-Vantour, Don Head, Richard Harvey, France Poisson, and Phil Higo). As of today, politicians in parliament are debating the prison reforms drawn up by the Transformation Team.

On June 2nd 2010, the federal government announced a new bill to terminate payment of Old Age Security (OAS) and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) to federal prisoners. The government looks to save \$2 million dollars by robbing convicts of the pensions they wasted years of their lives working to earn. Human Resources Minister Diane Finley got excited by the prospect of stealing from prisoners and pointed out that "taxpayers could save an extra \$8 million if the provinces pass legislation extending the suspension to all prisoners serving more than three months."

As if the humiliation of getting robbed in prison isn't enough, in June 2009, Peter Van Loan, Canada's current Minister of Public Safety, brought a filthy piece of legislation to parliament: an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Criminal Code, known as Bill C-43. This bill proposes changes in corrections, such as the aforementioned amendment to statutory release but takes it even further. David Mackenzie, Parliamentary Secretary to Peter Van Loan, broke it down in simpler terms in his speech to parliament during the Bill's second reading: "for example, the police could arrest without warrant any offender who appears to be in violation of parole." If this bill passes we will no longer need to violate parole to be sent back to prison (with a warrant), but "appear to be in violation of parole" in the eyes of police.

In the Transformation Team's November 2009 report-back to the CSC, known as the Transforma-

tion Agenda, the team clarifies the need to "adjust interim capital plans to respond to potential population increases associated with pending legislation." No kidding? After giving so much power—to harass, arrest, and imprison us—over to the cops-pigs-murderers, they aren't expecting fewer people to end up in prison. The 175-year history of prisons being built, expanded, and filled throughout the country, ensures that their adjustment will serve us like the adjustment made to the tightness of a noose served Louis Lingg in Chicago, 1886.

To Sterilize a Contagion...

"The new supermax model is a bloodless, antiseptic and remote-monitored environment. The cells are prefab, the furnishings fixed, molded and as cold and lifeless as their designers. Many of the newer prisons are literally buried beneath the ground, saving the prisoner the imaginative leap to understanding the metaphor. A farmer standing within the vicinity of Joliet, Illinois, describes the bone-chilling cries he hears coming across his fields on some nights. Perhaps, when a more compassionate age dawns upon us, the new supermaxes will be kept as museums of man's inhumanity to man. Until then, the unfortunate souls who remain imprisoned inside these sterile tombs will continue to howl as they descend into their madness, void of witnesses, void of human contact."

-Stephen Reid

Considering the rampant overcrowding in prisons across Canada, it isn't a surprise to hear the cries of jailers, coming from inside these understaffed prisons, asking either for puncture-proof vests or a speedy trip to the hospital. Adult and youth prisons in Manitoba alone have the combined capacity to cage 1,662 people, and as of October 2009 they're holding 2,158 prisoners. Two thirds of the people locked up inside provincial jails throughout Canada haven't even been sentenced yet, and the average cost for keeping someone in prison for a

night is around \$162. To put this in perspective, it would be much cheaper to rent an inmate an apartment at \$900 a month.

On February 22nd 2010, “pending” legislation was passed in Ottawa. The federal government eliminated the two-for-one credit rule, which meant that the time served in prison before being convicted of a crime counted double, i.e. six months would have counted as one year served. By changing the legislature, they’ve ensured that anyone who is remanded (in custody) during their trial will spend more time in prison because they now have to serve the full length of their sentence. They hope this will clear up their flooded courts, because they’ve now made it pointless for people sitting in remand to delay their sentencing in order to cut down the time they would have to serve after sentencing. The CSC estimates that eliminating the two-for-one credit will move another 3,000 men and about 300 women into the state’s overcrowded jails.

As is continually stated in the Transformation Agenda and Roadmap, the penal architects see the problem around the prison system resting in its inefficient managing of “multiple sub-populations of offenders” with “separate/ discrete facilities.” Their project is to put these sub-populations into one big facility, into complex-style super-prisons. By centralizing the cost of running several prisons into one large high-tech regional complex-prison, they intend to lock up more people for cheaper. These, however, will require loads of private and

public money to construct.

This project is enormous. Craig Jones, the executive director of the John Howard Society, has predicted that the CSC is on the verge of becoming “the largest building contractor in Canada.” The



federal government is clearly on board, not only because they accepted the roadmap. In March 2010, the federal government gave the CSC a 43% budget increase to help them embark in their “major construction initiatives.” This increased the CSC spending budget on infrastructure from \$431.2 million to \$680 million. With multi-million dollar projects like the Toronto South Detention Centre (ex-

plored later in this article) it’s clear this budget isn’t going to ward off the profit-making schemes of private investors.

Don Head, the commissioner of the CSC, explains how this budget serves “to best prepare [CSC] to implement many of the changes associated with several of the pieces of legislation that will result in a growth of our inmate population.” Don spells it out for us, in case we didn’t catch it in the Roadmap, the Transformation Agenda, the budget increase, or in the changes in legislature: they have begun to grant more power to the police, to criminalize more people, and hope to lock them up for longer in cost efficient super-prisons –while cashing paycheques, paid in misery.



be cautious, but we also recognize that there will always be prisoners in the struggle. When there is a movement that attacks, the state will seek hostages, even if it can’t find those responsible for the attacks. But life and struggle continue inside prison. Once we truly realize this we will be very strong. Jail is shit, but life in the street is also shit. In jail we can still learn and expand our minds, write and influence people, make art or fall in love, create deep and caring friendships, and we can create anarchy and struggle against authority.

The struggle in the prisons is easier when there is support from the outside, just the same as how the struggle in the street is easier with support. And the most important kind of support is emotional. The insurrection has an emotional foundation. We struggle because we feel rage and hope, not because we drop below some minimum of income or nutrition or because the unemployment rate has exceeded a certain percentage. Many people who die of hunger obey up to the very last day. And we don’t struggle because we are playing a role in a rational historical process –the materialist predictions of the Marxists have been as inaccurate as those of the economists.

So the attack cannot be an act of desperation, because if we feel desperate when we enter prison, or when we begin another day in the street without having seen any visible effect from our actions, we will give up. But if we speak of our feelings, if we search out our friends instead of leaving them alone to deal with their “personal problems,” if we take care of ourselves, then we will smash the capitalist-patriarchal isolation. We will create a collective force, and that is exactly what we need in order to struggle.



November 8th 2008: Kent Institution (BC)

A fight broke out in the gym among prisoners. They were sent back to their cells to be placed into lockdown. Some refused and instead tried to break through a fence to gain access to the roof. Guards used gas to get the prisoners under control and after a scuffle, a guard was sent to the hospital.

November 7th 2008: Paul Dojack Youth Centre (SK)

Four men escaped. Three of the inmates were apprehended shortly afterwards while the fourth remained at large for ten days.

October 25th 2008: Brandon Correctional Institute (MB)

Two inmates escaped by getting through a fence in the exercise yard and climbing to the roof. They were unfortunately caught later that day.

September 26th 2008: Kent Institution (BC)

Prisoners refused to return to their cells to protest the new “enhanced structure program” for prisoners with “behavioral issues.” Negotiations took place and the prisoners returned to their cells the next day.

August 24th 2008: Regina Correctional Centre (SK)

Six men escaped through a hole dug into a cinderblock wall and covered by a radiator grill. They protected themselves with blankets as they climbed over a barbed-wire fence. One of them was recaptured shortly after, and the rest were recaptured a month later.

ing the witnesses with a well masked smile- and disappearing into the multitude. In this way a simple painting or broken window becomes a public event, a little rupture in normality that will affect the rest of the day of everyone who saw it and infiltrate in their conversations with colleagues and family.

Sometimes clandestinity, acting at nighttime is necessary. Sometimes our goal is not to communicate but to cause damage, to sabotage, if only for a while, the workings of the machine. But we should never forget: going alone against the state is suicide. Without society, we cannot survive, not as revolutionaries, and not even as healthy human beings. Without losing our own identity or collaborating with the institutions, we have to participate in the movements and social struggles. We have to have a presence and create relationships with people outside of our circles. We shouldn't pass up a protest just because there will be lots of flags of the shitty political parties there. Instead, we should go in our own bloc, with black flags or the simple flag of direct action (which is the stick without the rag), so they see we exist, that there is another possibility besides collaboration with the system.



We don't form a bloc to label ourselves –in fact we should abandon any exclusive radical aesthetic (which is to say open ourselves to many aesthetics) because one task of the mass media is to distinguish and separate everything, it is to say: look, those are the radicals, they're different, they're just

like that, and it doesn't have anything to do with you. Instead we form a bloc to avail ourselves of a collective force and to keep from losing our identity. There is no person without identity, and you can't struggle without your own reasons.

Hiding yourself or dressing up and speaking like "a normal person" is to say that struggle is not normal, and this is the lie of the state. It is also a vanguardist insult against everyone else to say that people can't understand your position if you express it honestly, and that they can't choose it or not choose it for themselves.



We need a political presence as well as a social and cultural presence. We must not let ourselves be surrounded. We need to relate to our coworkers and our neighbours. If they disappear me one night and the neighbours never realize it, I've already lost. I was already disappeared. And thus, appearing in the lives of the others, we will also develop a social intuition, which is extremely important: understanding the level of social tension, the level of discord, the themes that provoke rage, and which type of attacks other people will understand.

Caring for ourselves

We do not attack to satisfy an impatience. With each attack, we must think: if I were in jail for this action, would I be proud? We can prepare, we can

Prison World

"Don't go through the walls, because behind them there are only more walls. The only way is up, because they're never going to build a wall between the sun and the Earth."

-Roberto Zucco



Prison construction has already begun in places like Toronto, where Zeidler Partnership Architects has designed the 1,650 cells of the Toronto South Detention Centre (TSDC) that are being built into a concrete reality by the ITS consortium. ITS represents a joint venture between EllisDon Corporation and Fengate Capital. EllisDon is providing construction services and Johnson Controls LP is providing facilities management. "RBC Dominion Securities acted as the financial advisor to ITS and project financing was raised from a consortium of lenders including: Calyon, Norddeutsche Landesbank, Banco Espirito Santo de Investimento, Bank of Montreal, Canada Life Assurance Company, and Sun Life Assurance Company."

The TSDC is an addition to an existing prison in Mimico, Ontario. Construction of this \$600 million project began in October 2009 and is slated to end in fall 2012. That same year, the Toronto Jail (or Don Jail) will close its doors after transferring

its inmate population to the new TSDC.

For years, prisons have been used to incarcerate immigrants. However, with the overcrowded jails there is a higher demand for holding cells. This is the reason for the Kingston Immigration Holding Centre, an addition to Millhaven Institution to the west of Kingston, built in April 2006. The sick irony of this arrangement is that the detainees work in the prison for CORCAN, a corrections "rehabilitation" program, building furniture that will furnish the very government offices that have denied them citizenship and will eventually sign-off their deportation papers –years into their incarceration.

As with the jail in Mimico, Millhaven Institution, North Fraser Pretrial Centre, and others, expansions on the original models were required to accommodate an elevated prisoner population. The increased level of migration caused by environmental collapse, climate change, war, economic austerity measures, poverty, famine, etc, is magnified by the global capitalist system and only aggravates this overcrowding.

Instead of dealing with the root causes of this elevated migration, prison is applied as a solution, a way to manage the instability created by a large migration of undocumented individuals. The destruction of the environment and of peoples' territories is not separate from the ways in which the state manages their consequences: militarizing borders with control technologies, building detention centres, organizing raids on immigrants, etc. Prison will always maintain exploitation with social control, the displacement of undesirables, and the repression of uncontrollable rebellion.

In the past few years, there has been a lot of resistance to detention centers throughout Europe. The largest detention centre in France at the time, know as the Administrative Detention Centre of Vincennes, was burned to the ground by its pris-

oners during a revolt in June 2008. In Nates, Bordeaux, Mesnil Amelot, and in other centers in France, similar events took place.

In 2009, a large detention centre on the island of Lampedusa, off the coast of Italy, met the same fate as the Vincennes detention centre. On the 24th of August 2008, the Belgian detention centre 127bis in Brussels also became a tinderbox of social conflict. On March 12th 2010, riots broke out in a detention centre in Aluche Spain, where the prisoners attempted to set fire to the building.

In Kanada, the context is not far behind. The recent explosion of riots and rebellions within the prison system whisper the prelude to a requiem that will send these cages up in a cloud of smoke, back to the dead colonials that gave them form.

“My statement to the interrogator that I do not renounce any form of struggle against state and authority is the only reason why I’m in prison and not their made up charges. If they expected statements of repentance and loyalty from me they thought wrong. In my life I haven’t learned to crawl left and right like a snitch and informer, I haven’t learned to betray my friends and comrades, to abandon them, to denounce them in front of my persecutors to save myself. In my life I’ve learned to keep my head up high, to be a proud person and not to crawl even if that has a cost. If some people have learned to live like that, I really feel ashamed for them. In this economic situation where the bankrupt Greek state under the umbrella of the I.M.F. tries to terrorize and suppress every subversive attempt, afraid of the ‘Decembers’ that will come, it is our task to fight for its total inversion. I will continue to fight against the policing and control over our lives, for the destruction of prisons. For the social revolution and for freedom. Because in this life freedom is not given to you, you fight for it and win it.”

***-Vaggelis Stathopoulos
Trikala Prison 10/5/2010***

or with groups of friends who are also afraid but decide to confront this fear together.

We need affinity groups that are well put together, that have an agility to attack and to respond to social realities. If the security hoards assault an immigrant in the metro, an affinity group in that neighbourhood should be able to respond with sabotage the same night. If we work on this agility, we will be able to respond immediately when there is a rupture, and in a rupture the first reactions of the society can characterize everything that follows. That is to say, with our response, we can change history. If we have to wait one week to plan a response, we can’t: because then it wouldn’t be a response, it would be a ritual.

Even when there are no ruptures nor even much social tension, our actions continue to be valuable. If there are attacks, they can serve as references for the rest of society, making visible that there is conflict and disagreement. Seeing that conflict is a fact, they might change their idea of the legitimate response in these situations. We will not win over large masses as long as the system appears to be functioning normally, but in the moment, when they are searching for tools beyond the democratic and the controlled in order to respond to the indignity of living in this system, they will remember your actions.

Connecting Ourselves

Invisible actions aren’t worth much. And their value is questionable if the rest of society only sees them through the eyes of the mass media. Our actions are for ourselves, for our enemies, and for society. They are not for communicating with the press or influencing their world of shadows. If they don’t publicize our attacks, WE DON’T CARE. This is not to say we can ignore the media or any other elite institution and it will go away. Sometimes we have even seen that contradictions between the institutions can be exploited, and the media can be temporarily used against the police. But they must not be the audience for our actions, nor our means of communication. When we attack, we do not do it for them. But if the people in the neighbourhood don’t know that we have risked ourselves to attack the system –and every attack against capitalism should also be an act of love- this makes us sad. More actions can be carried out in broad daylight, checking out the surrounding streets first to make sure there’s no passing patrols, dedicating thirty seconds to your target –all the while greet-

out some windows in a possible escape attempt.

November 28th 2008: Grierson Centre (AB)

A man sentenced to life in prison for killing his landlord walked away from the minimum-security prison.

November 25th 2008: Pinegrove Correctional Centre (SK)

A prisoner escaped during an “escorted absence into the community.”

November 19th 2008: Niagara Regional Police Headquarters (ON)

Someone ripped a toilet out of the wall of a holding cell, flooding the building and causing a ceiling to collapse. He was tasered in a battle with the police and charged with two counts of mischief, breach of probation, and assault with intent to resist.

November 16th 2008: Central Nova Scotia Correctional Centre (NS)

Prisoners in two rooms refused to comply with a lock down and trashed one of the cells. 13 guards were called in from home and other parts of the facility to help put down the revolt. Tasers were used on the prisoners. This jail, which has room for 224 inmates, has been overcrowded with over 300 people for some time now.

November 8th 2008: Saskatoon Correctional Centre (SK)

Two inmates climbed several fences of the prison but were caught before clearing the final fence.



From Antisistema 25, Barcelona

May 2009

The streets are filling up with more and more police. Each cop hides a secret: that it's easy to attack. Everywhere they aren't—and they can't be in all places at the same time—there are banks, real estate offices, car showrooms, airline offices, supermarkets, surveillance cameras, ticket machines in the metro, blank walls, advertisements. And every time they tighten their laws and their occupation of our neighbourhoods, that which constitutes an attack becomes more accessible, more common, more easy. When they declare war on graffiti, under their campaign of civic ordinances, we can wage war against the state with cans of spraypaint. When they try to impose total control over public space, every disobedience and spontaneity can be an act of rebellion.

Preparing Ourselves

Acts of rebellion will not abolish the state in pieces. And they won't have a gradual visible effect. The state imposes an artificial stability. Under the urban asphalt the social tensions can grow discreetly, until an unpredictable moment when they burst forth and destroy that stability. History doesn't change in peaceful waves, but in violent ruptures. But if we wait, be it for waves or for ruptures, while the state busies itself every day with winning the contest, we won't be able to facilitate the rupture or be prepared when it comes.

We have to prepare ourselves. Yet while preparation is very important, courage and ease of action are more important still, and one does not attain these qualities talking and drafting proposals for hours on end, having to meet for three weeks before realizing an action. Ease of action is attained after the action. Courage is attained with practice,



“They’ve taken us prisoner, they’ve locked us up: me inside the walls, you outside. But that’s nothing. The worst is when people—knowingly or not—carry a prison inside themselves... Most people have been forced to do this, honest, hard-working, good people.”

-Nazim Hikmet

Faced with the restructuring of prisons and their “correctional” apparatus, the chains that bind us to our slavery are becoming shorter and shorter. Those of us who would do away with the cages built around us have some important questions to ask ourselves about the methods and direction of our struggles. As the society outside the walls of prison begins to see an increase in tension and instability, the entire legal machinery (with its courts and prisons) is also weighing heavy with the burden of its overcrowded pens.

As a structure, prison is being applied to manage the growing instability caused by war, economic

crisis, ecological collapse and the elevated migration and social conflict that result as a consequence of the last hundred years of rampant capitalist exploitation of land and people. Recently, prisons have been constructed all over the world for migrants, with surveillance and isolation units, and we will see more pop up to deal with the growing number of people sitting behind bars—awaiting their trials. The backlog in the judicial process is growing and swifter, harsher sentencing is on the agenda of Kanada’s correctional services, hoping to clear up its saturated cathedrals of judgment.

Surveillance, stricter identity controls, and inte-

grated policing permeate greater parts of society to serve as a deterrent to all who would think of revolting. The fires that erupted in detention centres for migrants across Europe and the riots that broke out in penitentiaries across Kanada in 2007-2010 urge us not to ignore the signs of things to come, but to meet them with our daggers drawn.

We're Tired of Walking in Circles

"I don't want comfort. I could never bring myself to put things up in the cell, nor did I want to hide the walls around me. I never wanted to believe that I could organize the cell into a small studio, as did the rest of the guys; and I fumed to see them get set up, because I know that someone who invests five hundred euros is not going to risk making a move that would set fire to what he bought."

-Max, from prison in France, January 2009



This prison-society has dragged us through its bureaucracies for far too long. Activists and leftists have watched the majority of their initiatives get buried alive by its legal-democratic avenues. After years of participation in the processes of the very system that robs us of our lives and imposes upon us its mediocre excuse for a dignified existence, we've come out as isolated as the prisoners with whom we seek solidarity and with few points

of reference that we can draw upon as moments in our struggles where we've developed our own power, self-organization, and direct action.

By self-organization, we mean organizing independently from all parties, trades unions, and other forms of representation. Instead of a specific tactic, we see direct action as a method of acting, seeking to directly change the conditions under which we live rather than asking the ones who sustain them to do it for us.

What little references we have to self-organized struggles that have acted directly to change social conditions –be it from prisoners or not– are invaluable to our current initiatives. Like comrades in Chile have done year after year with Black September or the Day of the Youth Combatant, we need to start making our own traditions that we root in resistance in order to give depth to existing struggles, continuity to the struggles of past companions, and points of reference, old and new, for comrades we have yet to meet at the barricades. These ideas give material strength to struggles that seek to develop a practice of self-organized attack.

The current restructuring of prisons also opens up possibilities for us to start creating a framework for ways of organizing and methods of acting that develop our collective strength. Because few have even considered getting organized, we have an opportunity and space in which to set the tone –creating a reference for ways of organizing and acting against this restructuring and the powers that orchestrate it. Similarly to how our comrades in Greece set the tone for the rebellion in December of 2008 through their response to the police murder of a young anarchist, we need to act socially and critically in ways that normalize the organization of attack: an uninterrupted struggle that refuses negotiation, mediation, reconciliation, and compromise with this world of prisons and those responsible for bringing it about.

in our struggle, as well as theirs.

A large part of the problem is how muddled this situation has become. Similarly to how our actions can clarify social conflict between exploited and exploiter, our choices within the context of this demonstration could have also helped to define the lines of conflict in this separate (but not isolated) struggle. In this way, we can work to clarify where the conflict exists in order to better understand how we can move to address it with our actions.

Our struggle to completely destroy every prison can only succeed if we move to eliminate the society that needs them. This means that part of our project is to find ways of inserting our perspective within other existing struggles. Another side of this is finding ways of opening up space within our struggle for the solidarity of others and their projects. On April 18th, we fell short of this initiative and the consequences are clear in the strain it has had on our relationships.

In this context it's clear how our struggles shouldn't be measured in terms of value dictated by the market: either we "win" or "lose." We succeeded in our objective for the demonstration, and yet there are "victories" like these which fall short (even though at first it doesn't seem so), and there are "losses" that help us grow. Our struggles are not a competition, but processes that develop. If we are to grow from this, then we must take responsibility for our decisions and address the people who have been affected by them. It's in taking responsibility and accounting for our actions that we move away from a prison society, with our dignity, our pride, and our heads held high. In this way we can continue to develop our struggles with solidarity and a clear intention to destroy the powers that destroy us: prisons, police, patriarchy, along with the rest of the structures of capital.

"Only then can an open and honest debate take place which advances the movement as a whole, and confronts the hypocrites who hide within our ranks, the yellow-spined, 'white block' liberals, 'soft cops', and de-maskers, who spread only fear, keep divisions in place, and serve reaction."

-Anon.

- An Anarchist

March 28th 2009: Niagara Detention Centre (ON)

About 17 inmates wearing masks and wielding homemade weapons took control of a section of the prison until the police broke up the rebellion. Damage to the prison was quoted at \$2,000.

February 7th 2009: Regina Correctional Centre (SK)

The prison went on lockdown after inmates got rowdy overnight. One prisoner ripped a sprinkler head off the ceiling of his cell. Three others barricaded themselves inside a cell with mattresses for several hours until the prison guards managed to remove them.

February 5th 2009: Atlantic Institution (NB)

Around 36 of the 225 prisoners of the Atlantic Institution refused to return to their cells for the night. The prison went briefly on lockdown after the rebellion was ended.

January 10th 2009: Stony Mountain Institution (MB)

100 prisoners rioted. They set fires and threw garbage cans at the prison guards. Some stabbed each other in gang related tensions. The corrections officers fought back with pepper spray and displayed their shotguns. It took six hours to put the prison back under their control.

2008

December 3rd 2008: Regina Provincial Correctional Centre (SK)

Two prisoners broke apart desks in their cells and used the pieces to smash

their behaviour. It's not only missing the potential to weave together solidarities, but it's actively impeding the progression of other people's struggle.

Whether or not the people who are trying to hold others accountable are our friends should not affect our ability to express solidarity; it hasn't before. In this struggle against prison we have shown our solidarity with revolutionaries around the world, many of whom we have never met or ever considered acquaintances. This is because our solidarity lies within the actions they have taken and the dignity of their struggle.

At home it's no different. Our comrades are carrying out a struggle against oppressive behaviour and those who reproduce it, and are prepared to face all the consequences. Some have faced interrogations by others, verbal attacks, a general meanness, etc. Their mental and emotional wellbeing has been severely strained. They've been isolated from participation in most projects because of the poor choices of those who've organized them, and the demonstration on the 18th was no different.

This conflict is nothing new: the power dynamics in question furnish the world in which we live. People are affected by these dynamics everyday, everywhere. This is not the first instance in which people refuse to account for the choices they make. This trend is pervasive; it's the norm in this society where bureaucrats, politicians, capitalists, and others cast off their responsibility in the exploitation of land and people. The situation I'm writing about has affected dynamics in our city for months now and it's for these reasons that I cannot comprehend why certain individuals, who refuse to take responsibility for their actions, were welcomed at the march. As a result of this, the people who are trying to hold others accountable did not attend, choosing instead to spend time with each other.

By not opening any space for solidarity with other



people's struggle, we end up closing both our struggle and theirs in on themselves. By isolating and alienating potential accomplices and their friends, we eliminate the possibility of sharing moments of collective struggle together, let alone sharing them with the prisoners locked up behind bars. It was a choice not to tell some people that they should stay home, or take action elsewhere, and that choice had consequences that I cannot rationalize.

I am also critical of my lack of action. Having acknowledged my part in these conflicts, I came to the decision to address, later rather than never, the shortcomings I've observed. I didn't talk to the organizers before the march about the potential complication of some people's participation in the demonstration. I know that some of the organizers were feeling overwhelmed before the march, and realize that it shouldn't just be up to them to ensure that space is opened up so we can share our struggles.

If we maintain communication with others who are engaged in their own struggle, we can ensure a certain respect and solidarity with each other's initiatives. Instead of silencing and isolating other people's efforts, we can build stronger bonds of mutual aid and help to clarify the points of conflict

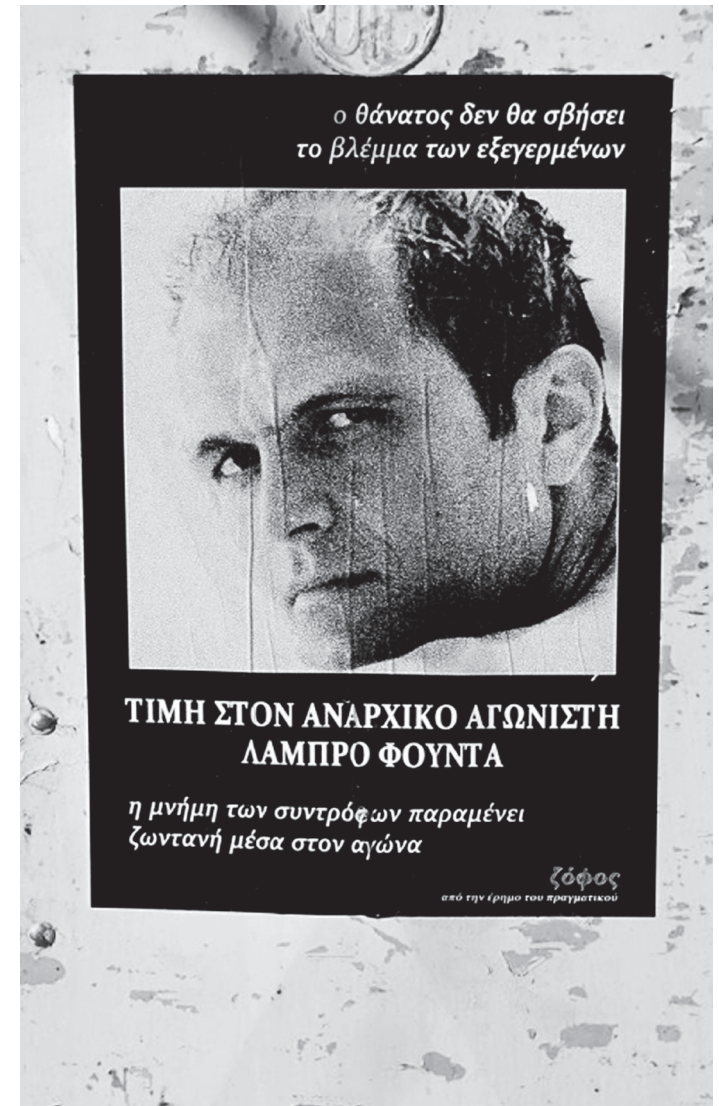
We'll have a difficult time building a social base from a group of individuals who want to put an end to their exploitation if we aren't carrying ourselves with honesty and consistently communicating our intentions and analysis. That's not to say that we should go around posturing with chants like "fire to the prisons" (in this case our actions need to speak louder), but that we are honest about our disgust for prisons and reveal it in our analysis and desire to take down their walls with the world that needs them.

We have no use for relationships that are built on misrepresented intentions and a watered-down analysis that hope to rally up a large quantity of "supporters," because it's the quality of the relationships we create that will determine the content of our struggle. Seeking out supporters means adapting ourselves to the level of those whose agreement and support we want to obtain. In this method lies the reproduction of existing commodity-relations where we transform ourselves into a badly made product for others to consume.

We need accomplices, not herds, and a struggle that doesn't need fiery images to make up for what it lacks in content.

Likewise, it's the quality and expansiveness of our struggle that determines the transformation of social relationships. This is why we can't give up on expressing and spreading our ideas with others: because the destruction of every prison and the world that needs them will not come about by clandestine organizations that only try to reach people with spectacular action and communiqués. A spectacle implies spectators: our struggle should attack this passivity.

It's the bonds we create based on our ideas and practice that need to spread. Acting separate from others isn't very conducive to extending a practice amongst individuals within a social struggle. We need to share moments of resistance with others



when we attack this prison-world with a diversity of tactics. Each individual needs to decide for themselves how they will attack based on their personal disposition and desires: paper and pen, occupation and insult, dagger and gun, street fighting and harassment, theft, poisoning, and arson...

That being said, clandestine attacks made by groups or individuals have their place in our struggles and can contribute a reference of possible targets and ways of attacking. What good is it to have or to circulate ideas and information if we are unwilling to apply them to our lives, individually and collectively?

Having ideas, like freedom or revolution, without the will to apply them is worthless.

A Point of Departure

“Prison is not simply a place, it is also a condition the antithesis of which is freedom. By the same token, the absence of freedom is prison, and only when the latter is perceived as one’s own condition does it become possible to enter the destructive dimension, without measure... Nothing less will do.”

-Jean Weir

As we’ve discussed, prisons are currently being restructured. This process is only intensifying the existing context of prison, inside and outside the walls. This development in social control is not taking place on its own; there are people, companies, institutions, etc, that bring it about. Here is our point of departure.

By attacking those responsible for maintaining and developing the prison machine, we achieve material results in our struggle. When developers lose their tools, it’s one less shovel made available to dig a dungeon. We also establish reference points for those who find themselves face-to-face with this restructuring and the architects behind it.

These established examples, of tangible ways of attacking those who profit from the incarceration of others, give us something to critique and develop, and can illustrate the direction in which we want to struggle: against prison and its world. This direction needs to find expression amongst the struggles of others. This is why we need to contribute to other initiatives that come into conflict with the prison system and its restructuring, in order to engage others with our ideas and practice.

Considering the need to communicate with others, it’s important that we make space in which to meet face-to-face within a context that reflects our tension to this world of prisons. By acting in solidarity with single issue struggles that pit people against specific aspects of the restructuring, we create the

space in which to contribute ideas and actions in a social context. Every time we insert ourselves into these social struggles, we can open lines of communication, bring in a broader analysis in order to connect struggles, and take steps towards creating reciprocal relationships and solidarity with each other’s initiatives.

Hard pickets outside of the offices of collaborators in the penal system and noise demonstrations outside of prisons also open up space for communication, while maintaining their tension with prison. The pickets serve to block the functioning of the office and are a social environment where picketers have the time to communicate amongst themselves as well as with others, bystanders, cops, or otherwise. Pickets also have the potential to turn into occupations or full blown street fights with anyone, cop or otherwise, who attempts to break the line.



The latter example also has the advantage of bringing prisoners into the equation. It seems easy at times for people to forget about those locked up inside the jails. Noise demonstrations contribute a joyful element to a revolt and can also open up the possibility of communicating with others, including the prisoners on the other side of the walls. If the jail is really locked down and prisoners aren’t able to communicate through the inch-thick shatterproof Plexiglas, it’s possible to have the means

“On Sunday, April 18th, 40-50 Anarchists and their friends held a noise demo in solidarity with prisoners locked up at the Maplehurst Correctional Complex and Vanier Center for Women. This super-prison is located 30 minutes west of Toronto. As the march began, the front sign into the prison was spray-painted with the slogans “against prison” and “against police.” We walked around the (large) perimeter of the institution with banners, yelling fierce chants, lighting fireworks and banging on drums. The prisoners mirrored our excitement with powerful rhythmic banging, yelling and cheering. This enthusiastic response was felt deep in our crew. We were inspired to see the immediate and tangible result of our solidarity. The cops and screws were certainly not pleased with our presence there (and we certainly are never pleased with their presence anywhere). Despite the cops’ intentions, no arrests were made. On the way out we cut through the parking lot to distribute flyers.”

(See : <http://toronto.mediacoop.ca/newsrelease/3264> and <http://325.nostate.net/?p=881>)

The action itself succeeded in its planned objective and will contribute to move the struggle against prison forward to its final conclusion. It’s within the way the march was organized and how it was carried out that I insert my critiques.

A few of our companions were placed in a tough position by the choices made by those who organized the demo, and by a lack of timely communication from comrades (one of whom is writing this text) about specific concerns with the participation of a couple people in the demonstration. The consequence of these choices, or the lack of concrete action, left some feeling disappointed, cranky, and frustrated.

For several months, a group of friends have been struggling to hold some people accountable for the actions they’ve taken during a conflict sparked by calling someone out on oppressive behaviour. A couple of these people participated in the demonstration. The person who was disrespected by their actions does not feel comfortable or respected in their presence, as they have made little to no effort to acknowledge or account for their actions.

Calling people out is more than just something people do to work out their shit; it’s a struggle against the shitty relationships and power dynamics they actively reproduce. By giving these people a space within our projects, we do nothing to support the struggle of those who are trying to get them to take responsibility for

May 20th 2009: Millhaven Institution (ON)

Some 48 prisoners refused to return to their cells and tried to break into an adjacent yard. Shotguns and gas were fired at the prisoners to put down the rebellion.

May 11th 2009: Collins Bay Institution (ON)

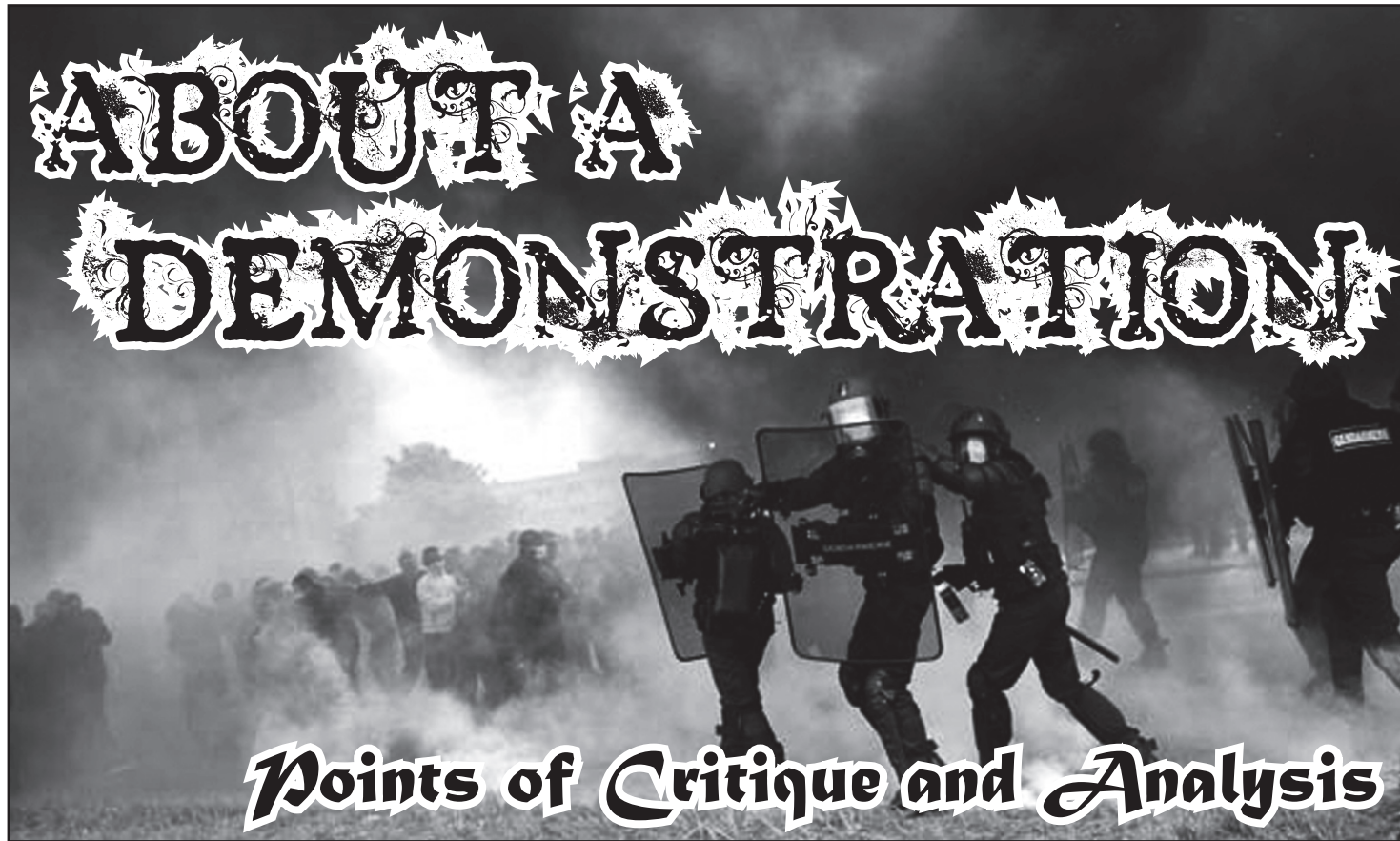
Around 327 prisoners did a one-day protest, refusing to work or participate in programs, against changes to their daily routines and other “social development issues.”

April 8th 2009: Central Nova Scotia Correctional Centre (NS)

Nearly 60 inmates went on a rampage after refusing to return to their cells. They set fire to garbage cans and bookshelves, smashed windows, used shards of glass against the guards, and ultimately caused more than \$300,000 in damages. Pepper spray and tear gas were used to quell the riot.

March 30th 2009: Matsqui Institution (BC)

95% of the 220 prisoners at Matsqui refused to go to work or participate in programs to protest a restructuring of their workday and time in the yard. The prison went on lockdown May 11th. Several prisoners initiated court proceedings citing inhumane conditions during the work strike and were shipped off to other jails or put into solitary confinement. The nine-week lockdown ended on June 5th after lawyers went public with complaints about the deteriorating conditions in the jail. There are no phones, toilets, or sinks in the cells of this old jail.



“There is no such thing as separate worlds, the world I live with my companion, with my children, with the few revolutionary comrades I have met in my life who want to overturn the world, all absolutely separate. That’s not so, it’s not like that. If I am a bastard in my sexual relations, I cannot be a revolutionary, because these relations immediately transfer themselves into the wider context. I might fool one, two, three people, then the fourth will take me to task and I can’t deceive them. There must necessarily be unity of intent, that elective affinity that links me to all my actions, in any context whatsoever, in everything I do, which I cannot separate... If I am a bastard, it will come out sooner or later.”

-Alfredo M. Bonanno

On Sunday April 18th 2010, a demonstration took place at a super-prison: the Maplehurst Correctional Complex and Vanier Centre for Women. It was organized to express a clear tension against all prisons and the world that needs them, as well as to break, for a moment, the isolation between those locked up on the inside and outside of the prison walls.

This text seeks to analyze the demonstration with-

in its specific context in an effort to clarify some ideas around solidarity and accountability. I hope we come out of this situation with a clear understanding of the ways our solidarity can sustain the struggles of others as well as our own.

In brief, the action was an unannounced march around the prison. Here is part of the communiqué for the action:

to communicate with prisoners (phone numbers, mailing addresses, etc) written up on banners on the outside, visible through the prison windows. This way if someone is interested in the action outside, they can try to get in contact. It’s after establishing communication with prisoners that ongoing solidarity becomes a tangible possibility.

It is this solidarity that has the potential to negate the function of prison as a weapon that isolates people and extinguishes revolts. Stripped of its purpose, the walls of prison become a simple formality. At that point the question is no longer how do we tear down the walls, but when.

By struggling in a direction that moves to negate the purpose of prison, we also move to strengthen our position in the conflict. When prisons become less isolating, they become weak. When they are weak, we are strong, precisely because it’s the nature of our relationships that will destroy prison.

When we develop a combative and revolutionary solidarity between the inside and outside of prison, then we will be less afraid to come into conflict with it. In other words, we will be much harder to control, because our struggles don’t end at the walls of prison and nor will we let them. No, our struggles will pass right through them, leaving nothing but a memory in their place.



“As a movement we have only made our first steps, laid the foundation, to move forward in a coherent and effective way; and that if we can pursue this line of organized resistance we will broaden little by little the reach of our actions and we will gain a greater strength as well, inside as outside. There is no other way if we want to move in the right direction; from the perspective to make our struggle a continuous activity against the capitalist system, we take the struggle against the prison apparatus as point of departure.”

-Insurgents in La Moraleja prison, January 2001

- Anarchists



From December 20th 2009 to January 1st 2010, Gabriel Pombo da Silva, anarchist imprisoned in Aachen, Germany, has declared a hunger strike, which prisoners from at least three jails in Chile including Axel Osorio have stated they will join. Marco Camenisch (in Switzerland), Jonatan (Sweden), Juan Carlos, Francisco, Honorio and Alberto (Spain), Diego (Argentina), Sergio, Mike, Evelin, Luca and Pasquale (Italy) have also said they will participate. Many other prisoners are expected to join, in solidarity with the struggle of Gabriel and in a common collective refusal of authority and the prison system. Gabriel hoped it might make the Christmas celebrations seem even more ridiculous than usual.

In a recent solidarity action on 30 November in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, by Anonymous Anarchist Action, 28 police vehicles were torched out of use. The action was dedicated to “the International Week of Agitation and Pressure in Solidarity with the Prisoners Seized by the Chilean State, and in support of comrade Gabriel Pombo Da Silva’s call for a hunger strike as a means of revolutionary struggle for our comrades in prison. Our action is in solidarity with comrade Emmanuel Hernández Hernández (prisoner in Mexico City), Gabriel Pombo Da Silva, Marco Camenisch, Juan Carlos Rico Rodríguez, Sergio María Stefani, Francesco Porcu, Alessandro Settepani, Leonardo Landi, Pablo Carvajal, Matías Castro, Axel Osorio, Diego Petrisans, Amadeu Casellas Ramón, Alfredo María Bonanno, Christos Stratigopoulos, and all the anarchist prisoners of the social war.” Solidarity means attack! Destroy all prisons!

Here are a few of the solidarity actions, which took place (chronologically):

of being innocent or guilty, taking action in a way to show how the cops are “wrong” and we are “right”, or fighting for something because it “should be legal.” Fuck that... We are against all hierarchical power and authority, controlling our and everyone else’s life. We don’t give a shit if cops are “wrong” or “right”, we simply don’t want these power structures to exist.

Therefore we see that opposing attitudes on this point are creating situations of distrust during demos etc., where people separate themselves from having to take part in a form of protest that is consciously disregarding the lines between legal and illegal. However, we are always in some way prepared and expecting for the pigs to be provoking or escalating these situations out of their own spontaneous, irrational whims, and to some extent even accepting this (does anyone remember the noise demo at the same spot 2 years ago, when all the demonstrators were mass arrested for 3 days, because the gates were open and some people decided to take the demo inside? The main attitude of this arrest was “but we didn’t do anything”, or “this is unfair”).

We would not like to come across as pushy, arrogant thugs who want to convince others how they should act and show their solidarity; in fact we encourage most forms (appropriate for the opportunity and intention). This critique is not meant as a personal attack, but as a challenge to the predetermined invisible frame our ways of struggling are locked into.

These points of discussion are coming out as much from the observation of the movement in this country as from self-reflection. We hope that the possibilities of a discussion can push our creativity and desires outside these self-imposed and system-submissive boundaries.

...For our theory to be practice and our passion to be action...



erty. Fire trucks responded but it is unclear whether there was fire involved. The jail was placed on lock down after the rebellion was put down.

2009

November 23rd 2009: Manitoba Youth Centre (MB)

Four youth barricaded themselves inside a unit of the jail. They made weapons, smashed things, and lit a fire. Police and an emergency response team came in to quell the revolt. The damage is estimated at \$52,000.

October 4th 2009: Brandon Correctional Institute (MB)

Twenty-seven inmates ran riot, damaging the units. The riot act was read; pepper spray, stun grenades, and water hoses were used to put down the revolt. Extensive damage was caused to the jail, including an exterior wall that was smashed open, and fires that were lit.

July 21st 2009: Warkworth Institution (ON)

About 200 of the 579 inmates ran riot for 20 hours. 13 inmates were sent to the hospital, one died of an overdose, and the recreation area was set on fire as inmates burned “whatever they could get their hands on.” The riot act was read for the first time in the prison and “let it burn!” could be heard chanted from the recreation yard throughout the night. The prison remained on lockdown for weeks, making it the longest lockdown in its history.

June 13th 2009: Frontenac Institution (ON)

An inmate escaped but was caught five days later.



not naive enough to think that prison is not a realistic threat that applies to our life, more or less intensely, in every single moment. Its mere existence imposes limitations on everyone's freedom. Maintaining the distance above this reality and considering it something that could only happen to others, is including yourself in the spectacle, not in the struggle.

This brings us to the next point:

Why didn't anything on our part kick off, even given a rare moment of favourable circumstances? This time, like all others, we could go on listing hundreds of reasons to talk ourselves out of "going for it", choosing to de-escalate because of the insecurity and uncertainty of engaging in something we cannot predict the outcome of.

We are not promoting kamikaze missions for some idealistic and unrealistic fetishism of the revolution, and do recognize that there is still an infinite amount of patient and consistent work to be done for the destruction of this prison world (that doesn't only include militant situations). However, we are dissatisfied with the frustration and disempowerment that these missed opportunities leave. We were part of a situation where the people ex-

plicitly behind bars were putting their last bit of freedom on the line engaging in a rebellious act and we were unwilling and unprepared to step it up, to gamble with whatever illusion of freedom we think we have.

We have the impression that especially in Holland opportunities of escalation or of spontaneous and subversive collective action are not even taken into consideration as a realistic tactic, or as an essential part of our struggle, or as an urgent desire.

When you put yourself in a situation with strangers and/or comrades to "protest," this should not be a moment predetermined in its format and outcome. With any spark these situations could lead to rage manifesting itself without the distinction of the "good" legal way and the "bad" illegal way. That is playing their game, by their rules.

We find that much discussion on this topic needs to take place within any movement, especially in this country. We are living in a place where the reality of arrest is actually quite common. However, we see the main attitude towards these arrests, or the reasons why people choose to put themselves in these situations, still complying with the morality of the law. Still caught between these distinctions

November 30th - In Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, 28 police vehicles were torched out of use by a group calling itself Anonymous Anarchist Action.

Approx. December 23rd - Translated from informa-azione. Received and published from an email sent from a public telephone. A jewelers shop was robbed in Rome, Italy. "JOY IS IN ACTION WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO MARK THE PACE LIFE IS SHORT AND WE RUSH INDIVIDUALLY TO THE ATTACKS THAT ARE SUMMONING US ROME ROBBERY IN JEWELLER'S SHOP LOVE AND SOLIDARITY TO THE PRISONERS ON HUNGER STRIKE."

December 23rd - Around 70 people took to the streets in Santiago, Chile. 7 people were arrested and 2 "Carabineros" (Military Police) were injured. Buildings and cars were also damaged.

December 25th - Internationalistic Rebellious Front destroyed 3 vehicles belonging to the municipality of Stavroupoli in Thessaloniki.

December 26th - Two Molotov cocktails were thrown at the Chilean Consulate in Seville, Spain.

December 26th - Banco Santander, a bank in Chile, was bombed. "...For the destruction of authority and all institutional society, fire to the state, the jails, and the jailers!"

December 27th - The Conspiracy of Cells of Fire bombed the national bank and insurance agency on Sygrou Avenue in Athens, Greece.

December 28th - Revolutionary Cells (Xosé Tarrio Group) bombed an SUV parked in the vicinity of the Federal Prison System headquarters in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

December 29th - The Animal Liberation Front/Earth Liberation Front bombed the BBVA bank

branch and the Kenworth Company (construction contractor responsible for environmental destruction) in Ecatepec, Mexico State.

December 30th - The Revolutionary Cells (Salvador Puig Antich Brigade) bombed a Banco Francés bank branch in downtown Buenos Aires, Argentina.

December 31st - 30 anarchists held an unannounced demonstration at the Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre in downtown Hamilton, Ontario (Canada). They chanted, made speeches and noise, held banners, shot fireworks and lifted a banner towards the prison with helium balloons.

December 31st - 500 people marched and chanted to the Moabit prison in Berlin, Germany. Music was played through a stereo and a French hip-hop group sang songs. Snowballs and fireworks were thrown at the police. Two arrests were made. One of their banners read: "New Year's Eves to the prison - for the destruction of all forms of imprisonment."

December 31st - 20 people held an undeclared demonstration at a prison with slogans chanted and fireworks. Later, 250 people showed up for a demo. Speeches were amplified through a sound system and the gate to the prison was painted with slogans like "fire and flames to the state." Banners were attached to trees outside. One read: "Solidarity with all fighting prisoners."

December 31st - 40 cartridges were found after someone shot up the front windows and doors to the prison of Forest near Brussels, Belgium, with a Kalashnikov.

December 31st - 30 people gathered outside Lewes prison (near Brighton, UK) with fireworks and music playing from a sound system. They held banners and shouted messages of support to the prisoners inside.

December 31st – 20-30 people released fireworks into the grounds of Hortfield Prison (near Bristol, UK). Slogans were painted on the walls and loud noise was made.

December 31st – The entrance of the police union building in Barcelona, Catalunya, was set on fire by an incendiary device.

December 31st – Two police stations were attacked in Satiago de Compostela, Spain. A van and a car were firebombed at the local police station and another device was left at the national po-

lice station. “Vengeance for the anarchist prisoners on hunger strike... We are losing our fear.”

December 31st – An incendiary device with a delayed ignition was placed at the Plaza de La Remonta, next to the police station in downtown Madrid, Spain, as a warning and preview of things to come. “Let’s destroy the state, beginning with its guardians.”

December 31st – A demonstration was held at Koridalos prison (near Athens, Greece). “The passion for freedom is stronger than all the prisons.”



ished for this (put in isolation or something), but them. By being here we are only going to encourage this.”

This brings us to the first point, about how we see the role of solidarity within an anti prison struggle. At the risk of talking about prison in a romanticized, naive way, we will never consider the decision of a prisoner to disobey orders, and for one moment reclaiming the dignity of choice and self determination these laws try to strip, as something we shouldn’t encourage or be in solidarity with. This is the moment when we saw that there could have been the opportunity to take this spectator role, regarding someone else’s “unjust” misery, into collectively and openly engaging in the struggle against this (same) system that oppresses all of our lives.

For example, there were three cops (with radios, of course) present at the time, “supervising” us. They also left an empty cop car right behind the corner, still in view of some of the prisoners. Well, everyone’s own imagination of an empty cop car can fill in what could have happened next....

In our view the (limited) cop presence, ensuring that our demo was peaceful and law obeying, is just another expression of the prison society that locked up the people on the other side of the water. We were not there to fight for them, or to give pity. We were there as individuals who also hate and are repressed by the prison system’s existence, whether or not we’re on the “inside” or “outside” fighting against the surveillance, isolation, control and security culture that is imposed on our lives. We are struggling against its coercion for our own freedom and dignity. This struggle includes the very important component of active solidarity manifesting in each individual’s continuation of this struggle in their own lives, by their own means.

Preventive repression has pacified people’s anger, turning it into fear and paranoia. It convinces us of being privileged, something we should preserve and protect from unpredictable changes. (Which privilege? The one of not being behind bars? Having the right coloured passport?) In our opinion every missed chance to feed these tensions is another further step towards the coöperation with and submission to this prison world.

As much as we could be accused of not knowing from our own personal experience what it’s like to face serious prison time, we’re

**Unrest in Prisons Accross Kanada
An Incomplete Chronology ‘08-’10**

2010

**June 15th 2010: Central
Nova Scotial Correctional
Centre (NS)**

The Jail went on lockdown after an inmate was stabbed. 17 prisoners in another wing of the prison refused to return to their cells and smashed windows and recreational equipment.

**May 15th 2010: Brandon
Correctional Institute (MB)**

Around 11 inmates went on a rampage, smashing windows and other fixtures. After a few hours, an emergency response team put down the rebellion.

**April 18th 2010: Joyceville
Institution (ON)**

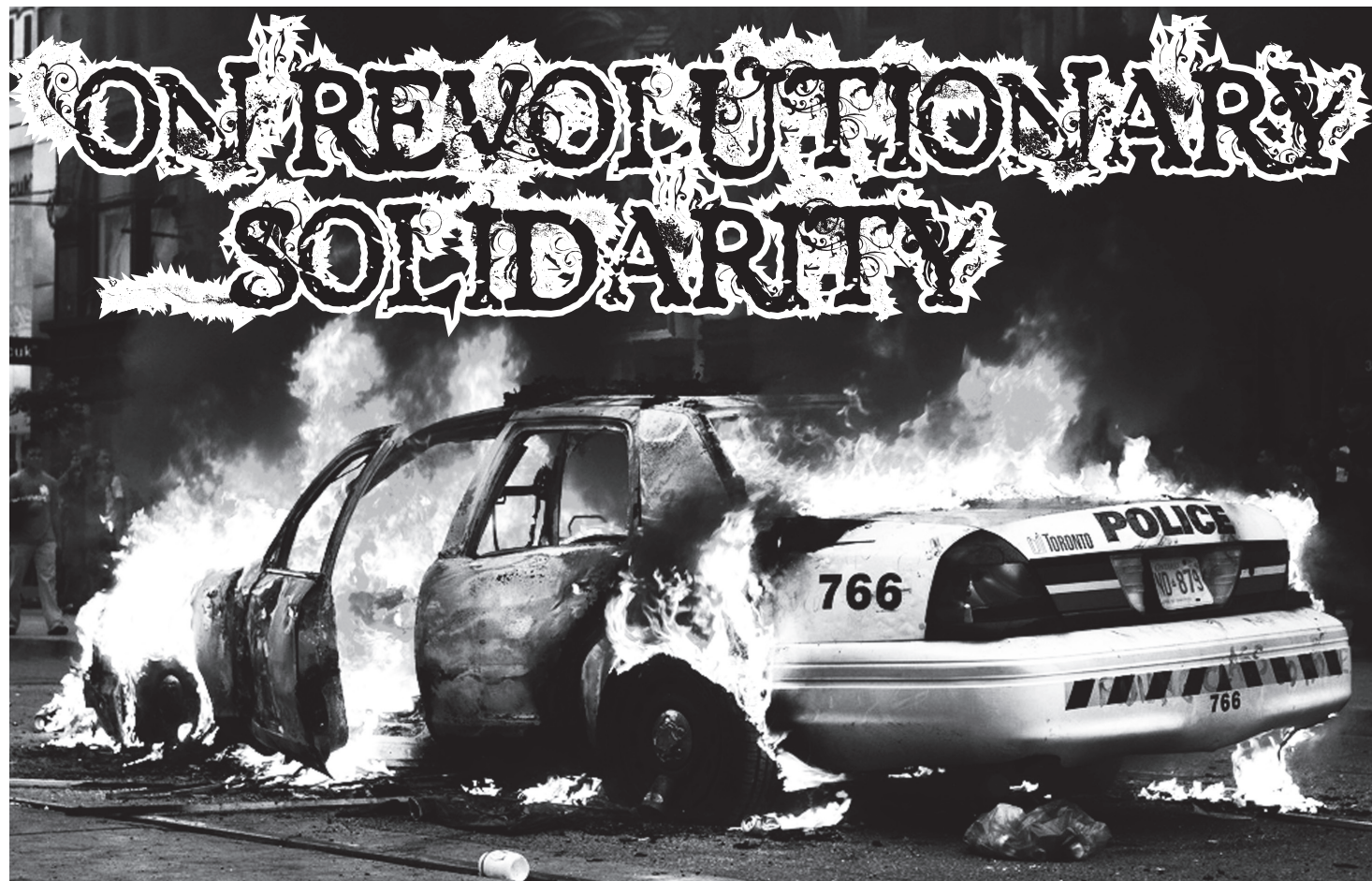
Some 70 inmates refused to return to their cells and fought with prison guards in the recreational yard. 27 remained outside all night until an emergency response team forced them back into their cells the next morning. Five inmates suffered minor injuries and three were brought to the hospital.

**January 26th 2010: Edmon-
ton Institution (AB)**

After refusing to return to their cells, prison guards shot over a dozen canisters of tear gas, in order to return around 27 of the prison’s 240 prisoners back to their cells.

**January 9th 2010: St. John
Regional Correctional Cen-
tre (NB)**

About 16 of the 153 inmates in the provincial jail barricaded themselves inside a wing and damaged the pro-



Prisoner struggle and the noise demo of Nov. 6 2009 at the foreign detention centre in Zaandam

olieophetvuur | 19 November, 2009

We would like to discuss two aspects of the noise demo, in order to practically and theoretically progress our anti prison struggle, from within the prison walls and from the open-air prison we are all living in. The two points we want to bring up are: firstly about our views on how we see the role of solidarity within the anti prison struggle, and secondly about our expectations within our own movement in Holland, and what we consider some of its shortcomings.

There was a moment during the demo when we saw the opportunity to switch our presence from a passive show of solidarity, to a more active participation against institutional repression and authority. This was after 40 minutes of shouting

back and forth slogans (FUCK THE POLICE; SOLIDARITE AVEC LES SANS PAPIERS; NO BORDERS NO NATIONS, STOP DEPORTATIONS; NO PRISONS, NO BORDER, FUCK LAW AND ORDER; OUR PASSION FOR FREEDOM IS STRONGER THAN YOUR PRISONS). The prisoners that were at that moment taking air started climbing on the gates, ignoring the screws, and refused to go inside. The tension that was being created between individuals expressing their disgust towards the illegalization of people started crossing the line of the legal predetermined way this expression should fit into. In the moment that we realized that this line was being crossed, we left. The reason for this was explained as “it is not us that are going to get pun-



Dear comrades,

Behind us we feel the strength of our gesture of insurgent love; informal and coordinated, lived and felt in as many ways as our creativity, our imagination, our desires and resources, (personal or material), have allowed and guided...

It seems to me that I am not the only one who has been moved by the interest that this hunger strike stirred up, by the demonstration of revolutionary solidarity and its results. I also don't think I'm the only one that wants to see that all that was experienced and shared during these days remain “only” a gesture... Gestures are for remembering (monuments, comrades, situations, etc.), but IDEAS and ACTIONS are for continuing and advancing...

We have remembered our own, not with the intention of creating “sanctuaries” to mourn at every anniversary, but to keep our comrades present in

our lives and actions.

Our comrades have been neither “angels” nor “devils”, but conscious individuals who remind us why they fought, and continue to fight. Their death reminds us of the determination of their struggle, a determination that is still alive...

What was the “crime” of Salvador Puig Antich? And the one of Augustin Rueda Sierra? Or the one of Franco Seratini? Or the one of Giuseppe Pinelli? Or the one of Soledad and Edo? Or the one of Carlo Giuliani? Or the one of Paco Ortiz? Or the one of Xose Tarrio? Or the one of Mauricio Morales? What were the “crimes” of these comrades? Should we now be stuck on the organizational label from where their militant practice emerged (those who had one), or focus on the IDEAS they defended?

Do you know where the murderers of our com-

rades are? Do you know which targets they attacked? The existences they lead? What were their dreams?

I remember Flores Magon once wrote: “It is not the rebels that create problems, but the problems that create rebels”...

Of course! The worlds’ problems are not going to resolve themselves... this is our endeavor.

Personally I will not wait (to act) for the masses (the exploited, the oppressed, the ignorant) to “awaken” ... I will also not wait for the “elite” to give up their privileges, for mercenaries to give up their paychecks or become “conscious” of their condition...

Some are guided by fear, others by greed or indifference, while most are buried alive by mental conformism... All of them remind me, day after day, that the solution to problems (personal or political) begins within ourselves. When I witness so called “comrades” scared to raise their voices, to speak clearly, or to take a stance in front of so much injustice, instead remaining silent...this convinces me even more that IDEAS, without will, are worthless. I hope therefore, that nobody is surprised if I continue to defend anarchists who practice direct action... all the Mauricio Morales and the Zoes...

We are not going to waste time and energy trying to convince those who have given up on direct action for a position in a union... or those who “talk shit,” but live a drab existence... They are not useful to the revolution. From within ourselves we find the choice of being “object”, “subject” or protagonists of our own existence.

(...)

During these days of action, December 20th to January 1st, which are in memory and tribute to our fallen (or murdered) comrades, we have found

many things that reaffirm our methods and confirm others: our IDEAS and desires will continue on the offensive (with unconfined expectations).

This initiative would have not been successful without all of those who participated and committed themselves to it; the comrades that took part in the hunger strike (from the inside) and those who contributed equally with their reflections; those who distributed and translated communiqués and texts, those who manifested (in hundreds of ways) and participated in solidarity demos or made murals, and those who sought the complicity of the night to place explosives and fire starters, or those brothers who grabbed their weapons and expropriated those capitalist temples of exploitation – helping the struggle and themselves meet material needs...and of course the great action in Tijuana where they kicked off the new year by machine gunning some mercenary patrols...

Yes, we are aware of everything that has happened and we’re proud of it! Thank you to everyone, comrades, for being there, for your solidarity, and for your revolutionary love...

With every action or demonstration we create bonds and feelings of complicity that make each other stronger in the current social war. Aside from this, everything that happens is being forged in our histories and in our warrior conscience...

Together we broke isolation and fake separations; we demonstrated our “operative” force, strength, anger and love, internationalism and combative commitment from a decentralized and anti-authoritarian perspective... I am agreeing with what was written by comrades at “presos a la calle” (a big hug!) when they declared, “It is not possible to rely solely on affinity-based mobilizations, or, exclusively on those reactionary in character. There is a possible equilibrium, and it is imperative to know when to use certain specific forms of struggle. This is why we cannot write-off reactionary

mobilizations (fighting for an end to raids, to isolation, to displacement, etc.), but likewise, cannot dismiss those based in affinities, about which some deluded people say there is nothing concrete to be earned.”

So, even though we are often gaining nothing concrete (for example in our struggle against FIES, against raids, or against the evictions of our spaces etc.), even if we are engaged in retaliatory/vindictive struggles, we still keep going... On the other hand, struggles shouldn’t be measured in terms of value dictated by the market: either you “win” or “lose”... In fact there are “losses” that help us to grow, and “victories” that fall short (even though at first it doesn’t seem so). These struggles are not a competition, but processes that develop with the intention of changing or destroying the powers that destroy us.

Our ability to obtain the goals that we set, succeeding at what is projected or being left halfway there, depends on our own capacities and resources.

What can never be taken away from us is what we learn from these journeys (our memories and experiences) and above all no one can ever say that we didn’t try with all our means.

As hard as it is to admit this, not all the factors in these processes are in our hands, or only in the hands of the forces in power. But, we have at our disposal a huge theoretic and practical arsenal to put to the test. We will not make one method more

sacred than another... some of them will be effective... it all depends on the destination that you are chasing...

I take this occasion to greet those who were subject to the repression of the authorities during the demonstration in Santiago, Chile, on December 23rd: Strength to you, comrades!

I also send my greetings to comrades at Culmine and their projects: informal reflections, hunger strike not-til-death, international ties, informal insurrectional project... for those interested please check out culmine.noblogs.org. This is also a reminder that two comrades from Culmine will be sentenced on January 19th...

Let’s be alert and ready to express our solidarity towards these comrades. All my solidarity to them and all my disgust to those who rail against the anarchist!!

This is a call out to all my internationalist brothers regarding the arrest of the Mexican comrade Socorro Molinero Armenta... does someone know the address where I can write him?

Good, then for now I’ll stop writing... we shall continue to debate the proposals arriving from Culmine and Presos a la Calle to deepen our thoughts on topics and questions brought up.

A strong anarchist and revolutionary hug to all our accomplices.

